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Bewick's Select fables
of Aesop and others

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TORONTO, 1901.

BEWICK'S SELECT FABLES.

"Is not the earth
With various living creatures, and the air
Replenished, and all those at thy command
To come and play before thee? Knowest thou not
Their language and their ways? They also know,
And reason not contemptibly: with these
Find pastime."

—*Paradise Lost*, b. viii. l. 370.

The above appeared on the titles of both the 1776 *and* 1784 *editions of* "SELECT FABLES," *T. Saint, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.*

A 492

Bewick's Select Fables

OF ÆSOP AND OTHERS.

In Three Parts.

I. Fables extracted from Dodsley's.

II. Fables, with Reflections in Prose and Verse.

III. Fables in Verse.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

THE LIFE OF ÆSOP, AND AN ESSAY UPON FABLE BY OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

Faithfully Reprinted from the Rare Newcastle Edition published by T. Saint *in* 1784.

With the Original Wood Engravings by Thomas Bewick,

AND AN

Illustrated Preface by Edwin Pearson.

51693
1901

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PREFACE TO 1871 EDITION.

IN the various periods of the world's history men have appeared who were gifted with greater powers of mind and intelligence than the majority of the people in whose age they lived, who, by becoming the preceptors or teachers of the masses, evidently fulfilled the designs of the Creator, by promoting civilisation and happiness, by unity of thought and knowledge. Such men were Æsop, William Shakespeare, Fielding, Scott, and many others, and later, in our own time, Thackeray and Charles Dickens. One of the most ancient and interesting methods of conveying instruction was by the art of Fable, Allegory, or Parable.

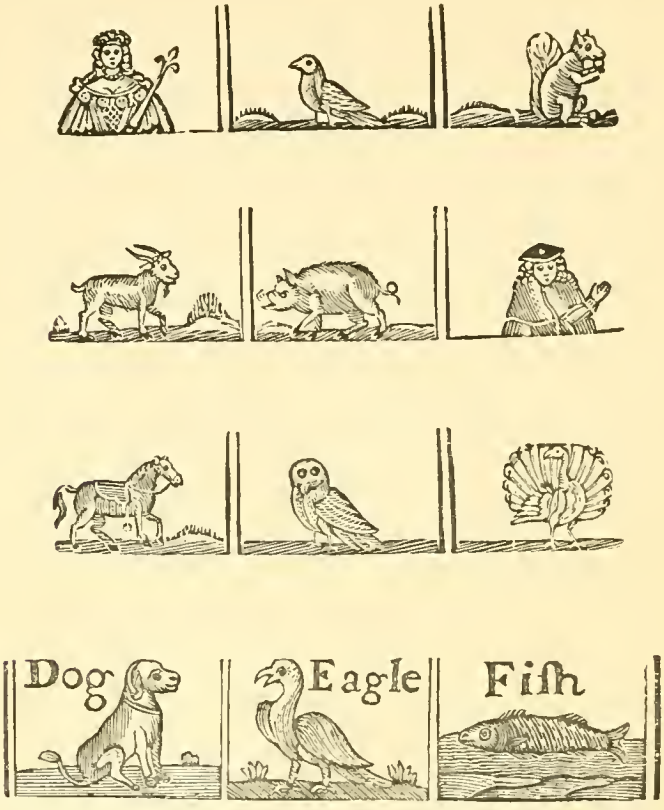
Fable is an ingenious method of conveying advice and instruction, without seeming so to do, by a diverting little narrative, which, attracting atten-

tion, irresistibly chains it till the moral is imperceptibly rooted in the mind, there to influence, for the *better* it may be, all future actions of importance. *Æsop* was, and *is*, the most favourite of Fabulists, of whom a fair and goodly succession have since appeared; but still *he* maintains, and will continue to maintain the foremost place in literature as a writer of instructive and entertaining Fables. We here reprint an edition comparatively unknown in the present generation, illustrated by the graver of Bewick, and arranged by the pen of Goldsmith. Bewick and Goldsmith's *early* works are *comparatively* unknown to the literary and reading world. We all know that Bewick *designed* and *engraved* the inimitable "British Quadrupeds," "Birds," "Fables," &c., and that Goldsmith wrote the "Vicar of Wakefield," "Traveller," "Deserted Village," &c., but what do we know of their *early* works—the *progressive steps* by which they attained their wondrous and *well-earned* celebrity? It has been the pleasing pursuit of the writer (for some years) to search for, and rescue from destruction and oblivion, all possible *early* works of Bewick and Goldsmith. The result has exceeded his most sanguine expectations. He has discovered at least *twenty* little works written by Goldsmith during his *weary* hours of adversity, all bearing *strong* internal evidence of the author's mind and style. (A work on this subject is preparing for the press, profusely illustrated with original woodcuts, &c.) The early editions of the *present* work were printed by T.

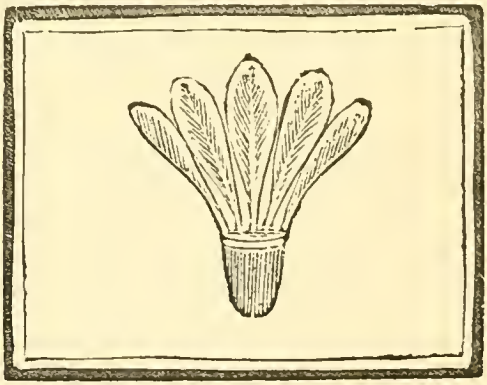
Saint, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. We will here give a very brief *resumé* of Bewick's *earliest* works (published by Saint), with a few woodcuts from the *original* blocks, thus illustrating the *progressive stages* of pictorial fine art by which Thomas Bewick succeeded in producing the wood-engravings which embellish the *present volume*, of which (edit. 1784) Jackson, in his work on wood-engraving (1861, p. 480), says:—

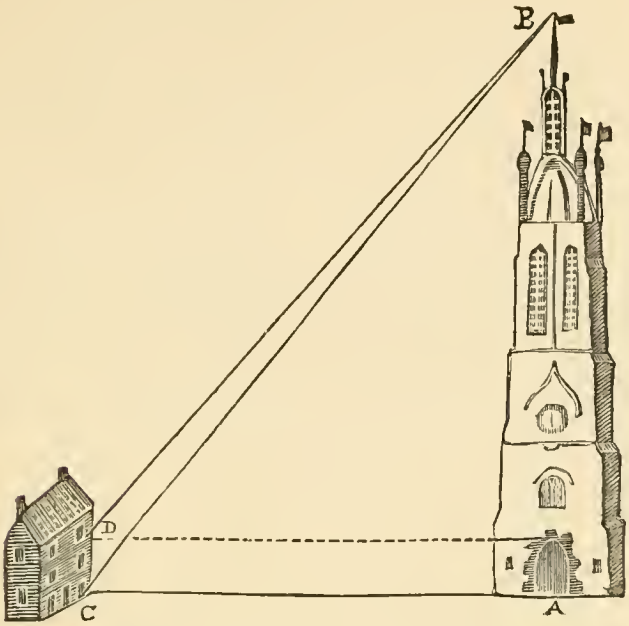
"He (Bewick) evidently improved as his talents were exercised; for the cuts in the "Select Fables," 1784, are generally much superior to those in "Gay's Fables," 1779. The animals are better drawn and engraved; the sketches of landscape in the backgrounds are more natural; and the engraving of the foliage of the trees and bushes is not unfrequently scarce inferior to that of his later productions."

Jackson gives *three* examples of these Fable cuts in his work, at pp. 480, 503 ("Wood-Engravings," 1861). Thomas Bewick was apprenticed to R. Beilby, October 1, 1767. It is probable that the cuts given in next page are among the *very first* engraved by Thomas Bewick during his apprenticeship, and were used in "A New Invented Horn Book," also in "Battledores," "Primers," and "Reading Easies." He then executed the diagrams for Hutton on Mensuration, 4to, 1770. One of the cuts is given in "Jackson" (p. 475), a representation of St Nicholas' celebrated steeple. This is the first *known* pictorial attempt of Bewick's.



"Horn Book" Cuts.

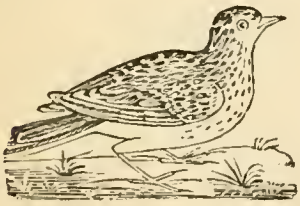




Facsimile of Bewick's cut, St Nicholas' Steeple, Newcastle, 1770.

No doubt coarse cuts were done by Bewick about this time for *local* Ballads, Broadsides, Garlands, and Histories.

The next recognised work *I discovered myself*, the "New Lottery-Book of Birds and Beasts, for Children to learn their Letters by, as soon as they can speak" (Saint, 1771, 32mo, bds. and gilt). Two of the cuts follow.



The "Child's Tutor" (Saint, 1772–73, square 24mo),

cuts, with *verses*, &c., by Oliver Goldsmith. The following is undoubtedly by the Poet's hand:—"The Lilliputian Magazine; or, the Young Gentleman and Lady's Golden Library, being an attempt to mend the World, to render the Society of Man more amiable, and to establish the Plainness, Simplicity, Virtue, and Wisdom of the Golden Age, so much celebrated by the Poets and Historians—

> 'Man in that age no rule but Reason knew,
> And with a native bent did Good pursue;
> Unforc'd by Punishment, unaw'd by Fear,
> His Words were Simple and his Soul Sincere.'"

(T. Saint, *circa* 1772, *early* Bewick woodcuts, 144 pp. 24mo.) The verse and title bear the *undoubted impress* of his genius and style. Oliver Goldsmith wrote it for J. Newbery, of London, but, as I shall show in my larger work on this subject, there was an arrangement between them by which Saint reprinted many of his (Newbery's) little books for the North-Country trade. We then have "Moral Instructions of a Father to his Son," comprehending the whole system of Morality, &c., &c.; and "Select Fables," extracted from Dodsley, and others, *adorned with emblematical* cuts, 12mo, T. Saint, Newcastle, 1772 and 1775. This, then, is one of the *first* works of Saint's we have seen containing cuts of Fables.

Having a doubt respecting the cuts of this rare book, I took my copy to Miss Bewick (Jan. 1867), and inquired of her if they *were* engraved by her father. She kindly gave me the following *authentic*

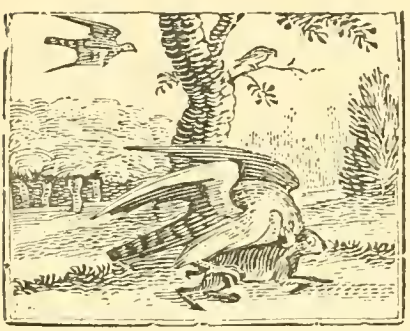
information:—"The cuts *were* engraved by Thomas

"Moral Instructions," 1772, and "Select Fables," 1776.

Bewick in the first year of his apprenticeship (1767–68), excepting the cut of a ship at sea, p. 167. This was engraved by David Martin, Bewick's fellow-apprentice, Bewick at this time disliking to represent 'water.'" This, then, sets all doubt at rest respecting the cuts in an "Æsop's Fables," "Gay's Fables," &c., &c., published by Saint about this date, in which the *same* and similar cuts were used. The following, used in "Gay," is evidently

Bewick's first attempt at the subject for which he afterwards gained a premium.

The next is the *first* edition of the *present volume*, "Select Fables" (T. Saint, Newcastle, 1776). In three Parts. Part I. After the Manner of Dodsley's. Part II. Fables with Reflections. Part III. Fables in Verse. To which are prefixed the Life of Æsop; and An Essay upon Fable—(*same Verse and Vignette, as in the 2d Edition, of* 1784). Containing one hundred and fourteen cuts, *including* those



"Select Fables," Æsop, &c. (Saint, 1776).

mentioned in the "Moral Instructions," *described above*, and fourteen larger and much superior cuts, *with borders*, afterwards used with others in "Gay's Fables," printed by T. Saint, in 1779. The same vignette appears on the title as in the Second Edition of this Book in 1784. It also has a copperplate frontispiece, "R. Beilby delint. et sculpt." 12mo, 211 pages, 2 pages of Index, &c. (notice the *variations* in the *title*, &c., to the 1784 edition). The only copy of this edition (1776) I ever had, or saw, is now in the unique collection of E. B. Jupp, Esq., who has kindly lent the block for the Frontispiece to the pre-

sent Edition. It was engraved for "The Beauties of Æsop" (Kendal, *circa* 1800–22), by Thomas Bewick, and is somewhat like Beilby's copperplate frontispiece to 1776 Edition, but infinitely *improved.* It contains about seventy delineations of animal and bird life, &c. (see the tailpiece at page 122 of *present* edition, extremely like in arrangement, execution, &c.), while the portrait of Æsop is certainly the most *reasonable* I have yet seen in examining the *numerous* editions which have passed through my hands.

About this time, 1773 to 1776, many works issued from Saint's press—"Robinson Crusoe," "Watt's Songs," Oliver Goldsmith's "Tommy Trip" (see my reprint, of 1867), "Goody Two Shoes," "Golden Toy or Fairing," "Tom Telescope's Newtonian Philosophy," "Tommy Tagg's Poems," and *numerous* others. Examples of cuts follow.

Similar to "Tommy Trip" series of Cuts.

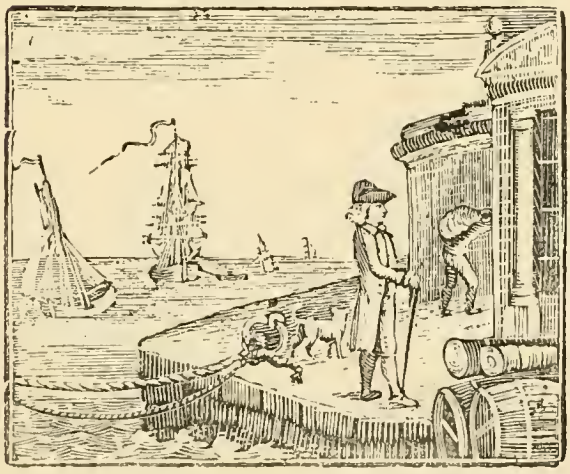
"Tommy Two Shoes."

"Adventures of a Kitten."

"Holy Bible in Miniature."

"Memoirs of a Peg-Top."

"Poetical Fabulator."



A New Edition of "Tommy Tagg," with sixty cuts, will shortly be printed.
(Specimen of the Woodcuts.)

We now reach a period to which Bewick himself thus refers at pages 59, 60 of his "Memoirs" (Longman, 1862):—"We were occasionally applied to by (local) printers to execute woodcuts for them. . . .

Orders were received for cuts for Children's Books, chiefly for Thomas Saint, printer, Newcastle, and successor of John White, who had rendered himself

"The Concert of Birds," from "Tommy Tagg."

"Story-Teller."

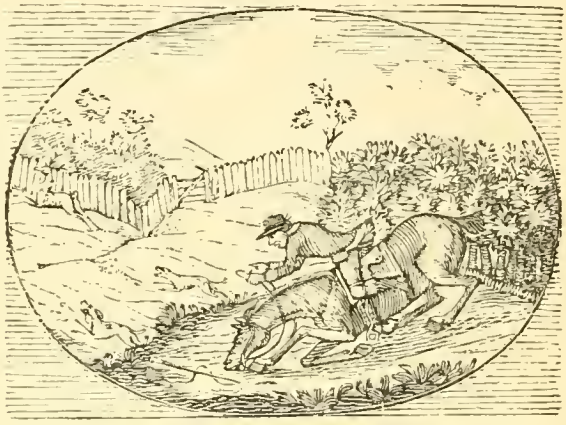
famous for his numerous publications of histories and old ballads. . . . My time now became greatly taken up with designing and cutting a set of wood blocks

for the 'Story-Teller,' 'Gay's Fables,' and 'Select Fables,' together with cuts of a similar kind for printers."

The following are among those referred to by Bewick:—"Youth's Instructive and Entertaining Story-Teller, being a Choice Collection of Moral Tales, Chiefly deduced from real Life, calculated to enforce the Practice of Virtue, and expand every social Idea in the Human heart. Adorned with emblematical cuts from the most interesting part of each Tale, and methodised after the Plan recommended by the late ingenious Dr Goldsmith. To which is added, by way of Preface, Thoughts on the Present Mode of Education." (Newcastle, T. Saint.) Three Editions, *circa* 1774–7–8, 12mo, thirty-seven woodcuts. The cuts in this book are larger than any in the preceding books. We give the cut at page 48

of a Shipwrecked Sailor kneeling on a rock saying

his prayers, the tide rising around him, which is the *first and earliest* engraving of this subject by T. Bewick, afterwards one of his favourite Vignettes in the "British Birds." The others are all about the size of the cuts in "Gay's Fables," 1779, or "Select Fables," 1784, and have similar borders.



"Bob Easy."

"Jackson" refers to this and the following two works:—"Gay's Fables." Fables by the late Mr Gay, in One Volume complete, Newcastle, printed by and for T. Saint, 1779, 12mo, 77 *cuts of Fables, with borders and* 33 *Vignettes;* for the tasteful and clever engraving of five of the cuts (one, the Huntsman and Old Hound*) the Royal Society of Arts presented Bewick with their medal; *it is further embellished with a beautifully engraved Frontispiece, by R. Beilby* (T. Saint, Newcastle, 1779). We give

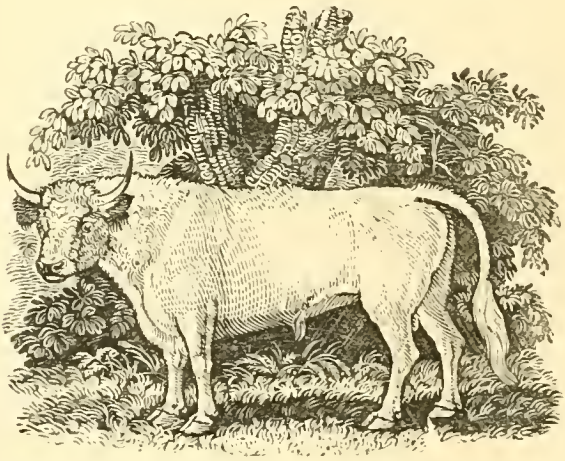
* An impression is given in "Jackson," at page 477 (Edition 1861, Bohn). See also next page.

an impression of the *original* wood-engraving, exceedingly interesting, as now Bewick seems to have received the required impetus or encouragement to produce the engravings for "Select Fables," T. Saint, 1784. In three parts. Part I. Fables extracted from

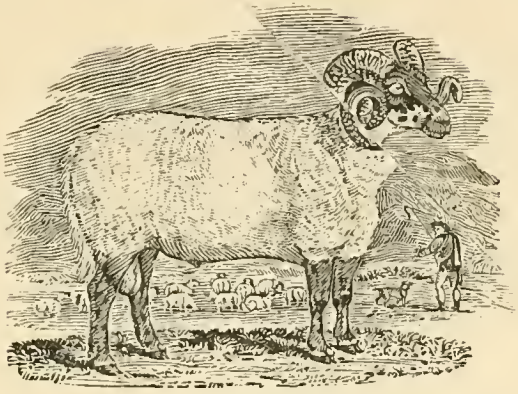
"The Huntsman and Old Hound."

Dodsley's; Part. II. Fables, with Reflections in Prose and Verse; Part III. Fables in Verse; to which are prefixed the Life of Æsop, and an Essay upon Fable. A New Edition Improved. For this edition a *new set of cuts* was engraved by Thomas Bewick. "These cuts were then deemed superior to any of Bewick's previous productions." The same year another impression of this work was printed with the same title page, but considerable variations in the letterpress, and vignettes occur at pages 122, 125, and 152, which are not in the former edition, printed in 1784, 12mo. This is the book we now reprint (Saint's collection

of Bewick's blocks having passed into my hands.) An original copy of the 1784 edition in fine state is so rare, that a copy has realised, at auction, £7, 10s. Bewick says (p. 60, "Memoir," 1862): "Some of the Fable ("Gay," 1779) cuts were thought so much of by my master (Beilby), that he, in my name, sent impressions of a few of them to be laid before the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, &c., and I obtained a premium." (Seven guineas, which he took intense pleasure in presenting to his mother.) We have thus, by easy stages, travelled through the various phases of talent, to the most important work produced before his *well-known* "British Quadrupeds," first published 1790; "British Birds," 1797, 1804; and his *large* edition of "Æsop's Fables," 1818 (each work embellished with his inimitable and ever-pleasing vignettes). Examples from all these works follow.

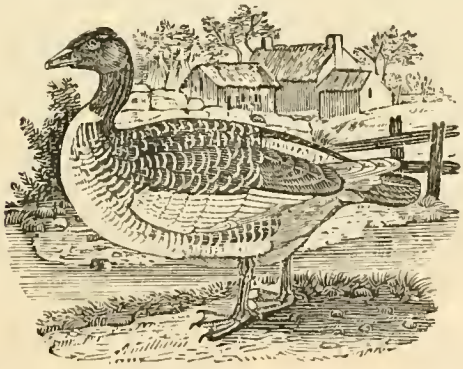


"The Chillingham Wild Bull."—Bewick's *large* engraving of this subject, with border, has realised twenty guineas. *See* "Jackson on Wood-Engraving."

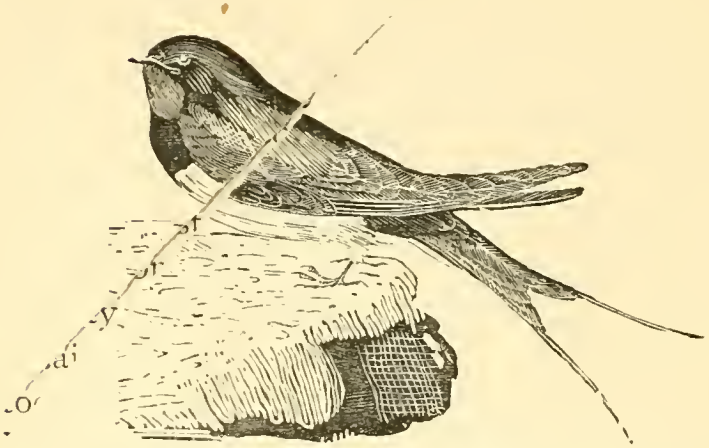


British Quadrupeds.

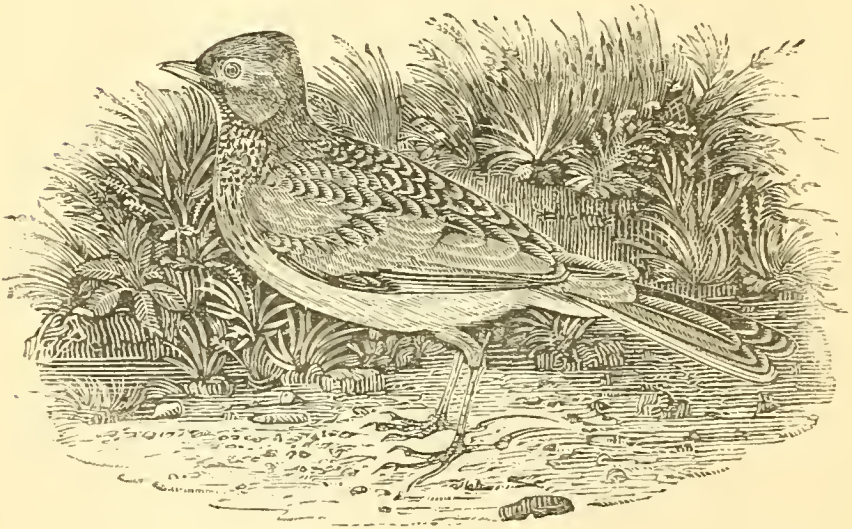
Vignette to "Quadrupeds."



"Select Fables," 1820, Charnley's Edition, 8vo, and in early Children's Books (Saint, Newcastle).



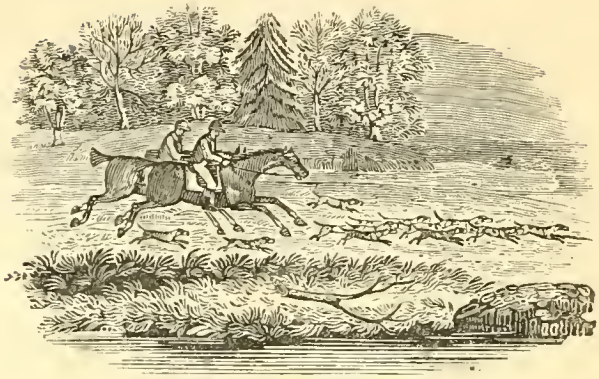
Intended for "Bewick's British Birds"—"Chimney Swallow," injured and rejected.



Facsimile of Bewick's Skylark.

Vignette to "Birds."—Angler and Sportsman.

Engraved for "Bewick's Æsop," 1818, unfinished and rejected.



Vignette to "Æsop."

These remarks are rapidly written, but they are the result of years of research and study: so that the reader of this Preface has a brief *resumé* of Bewick's talents from his *earliest efforts* to his most finished productions; *a result* which no one living is able to give from the *original wood-cuts* but myself; thus forming a most useful manual or pictorial *aid* to connoisseurs in selecting *early* works illustrated by "Bewick," the more *valuable*, as scarcely any of the works mentioned as published by Saint are in the British Museum.

Now, as to the "Goldsmith" interest as connected with this work, the 1776 Newcastle edition was evidently copied from "Dodsley's" and other editions of "Select Fables of Æsop" published in London prior to this period. In the meantime, J. Newbery and others, for whom Goldsmith wrote prefaces and arranged and edited books, had published new editions, so that when Saint went to press with "A New Edition Improved" (with a new set of cuts

by the Bewicks), evidently the book was remodelled and extended from one that Goldsmith had just edited. In Dodsley's Preface to his Fables, he says "he has been assisted in it by gentlemen of the most distinguished abilities; and that several, both of the old and the new Fables, are not written by himself, but by authors with whom it is an honour to be connected." Dodsley also refers to the Life of Æsop, &c., as being written by "a learned and ingenious friend." Doubtless Dr Johnson and Goldsmith were the "authors," and Goldsmith the "friend," here referred to. Be that as it may, the present work bears sufficient internal evidence in the "Essay on Fable," the "Poetical Applications," and the "Fables in Verse," that Oliver Goldsmith was the author; for it is identical in style with numerous prefaces and essays written about this period by Oliver Goldsmith for Newbery, Dodsley, Griffiths, and others. Much conclusive evidence on this interesting subject will be given in my new book on "The early works of Bewick and Goldsmith" (a Prospectus of which will shortly be issued). The applications to this edition are infinitely superior to any edition which had appeared prior to its publication. In Sir Roger L'Estrange and Croxall's editions, the applications were warped away from their original and intended effect by political distortions and obsolete terms, which often strayed far from, instead of assisting, the subject. It is somewhat refreshing, then, in the edition here reprinted, to meet with some applications which are everything that could be desired, in

easy, naturally flowing, and apt language, just to the point; and who was so much a master of such language as Oliver Goldsmith?—of whom Dr Johnson said, "He left no species of writing unadorned." It may be interesting here to quote from Bewick's Memoir of himself (not published till 1862), his opinion of this book, which at once justifies the parent, preceptor, or friend, in selecting this as a most *suitable* present for the young of both sexes; he says (pages 172–3):—"I was extremely fond of that book ('Æsop's Fables'); and as it had afforded me much pleasure, I thought, with better executed designs, it would impart the same kind of delight to others that I had experienced from attentively reading it. I was also of opinion, that it had (while admiring the cuts) led hundreds of young men into the paths of wisdom and rectitude, and in that way had materially assisted the pulpit."

The lessons intended to be conveyed through the medium of Fable are certainly plainer and easier to be understood in this edition than in the once popular "Croxall;" and the publishers believe, therefore, that the book in its present form will be found a powerful auxiliary in the important practical feeling for the education of the rising generation, illustrated as it is by the early but forcible and natural rendering of these Fables by the inimitable Bewick, through the medium of which is imparted the profound good sense, wisdom, and experience of the ancient philosophers. I have already exceeded the limits of an ordinary Preface. On a future occasion I will

endeavour to show how *coincidently* Bewick and Goldsmith worked together to produce results—the importance of which can scarcely be fully estimated. I will now conclude with one of those exquisite little pictures of nature that will never cease to exhibit the true art of pleasing as long as "the language of England is spoken, or her literature cultivated."

EDWIN PEARSON.

"Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good, which makes each humble bosom vain?
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These *little things* are great to *little man*."

THE LIFE OF ÆSOP.

—o—

ÆSOP, according to the best accounts, was a native of Phrygia, a province of the *Lesser Asia*, and born in the city Cotiæum.* He was a person of a remarkable genius, and extraordinary character; for though he was born a slave, by the assistance of his *genius* and *virtue only*, he procured his own emancipation. By his sage counsels and judicious advice he directed his countrymen to measures that secured their liberty, and by a single Fable baffled the tyrannical projects of Crœsus, King of Lydia. The most part of writers agree that his person was but unseemly, though there are some of a contrary opinion.† It is probable that he was of a low and diminutive stature, though agreeable in his complexion, and polite in his manners. It is, however, certain that he had a great soul, and was endowed with extraordinary mental qualifications; his moral character approached to a degree of perfection to which very few have attained. He appears to have had a true sense of morality, and a just dis-

* Suidas. † Alsop.

cernment of right and wrong; his perceptions and feelings of truth were scrupulously nice, and the smallest deviation from rectitude impressed his mind with the greatest antipathy. No considerations of private interest could warp his inclinations so as to seduce him from the paths of virtue; his principles were stedfast and determined, and truly habitual. He never employed his great wisdom to serve the purposes of cunning; but, with an uncommon exactness, made his understanding a servant to truth. Historians have given many instances of his wit and shrewdness, which were always employed in the service of *virtue*, *philanthropy*, and *benevolence*.

It cannot well be ascertained who were his parents, though some have affirmed that his father was a shepherd.* He himself was undoubtedly a slave; his first master was an Athenian, whose name was Caresias. At Athens he learned the Greek language in perfection, and acquired a taste for writing moral instructions, in the way of Fables, which was then the prevailing mode of teaching morals in Attica. His Fables are allegorical stories, delivered with an air of fiction, under various personifications, to convey truth to the mind in an agreeable manner. By telling a story of a *Lion*, *Dog*, or a *Wolf*, the Fabulist describes the manners and characters of men, and communicates instruction without seeming to assume the authority of a master or a pedagogue. Æsop's situation as a slave might suggest this method to him; for what would have been scornfully rejected if

* Philostratus.

delivered in an authoritative style by a slave, was received with avidity in the form of a fable.

Æsop had several masters; his second master was Xanthus, in whose service he discovered great wisdom and sagacity in answering questions, and reconciling differences. By the following stratagem he made his master's wife return back, after she had run away and left him, and effectually reconciled them: our Fabulist, then a slave, went to the market, and bought a great quantity of the best provisions, which he publicly declared were intended for the marriage of his master with a new spouse. This report had its desired effect, and the matter was amicably composed. The story of his feast of *Neat Tongrege*, and his answer to a gardener, are scarcely worthy of relating. At a feast made on purpose to celebrate the return of his master's wife, he is said to have served the guests with several courses of tongues, by which he intended to give a moral lesson to his master and mistress, who had by the too liberal use of their tongues occasioned the difference which was now agreed.

The third master of Æsop was Idmon, who was surnamed the wise. Idmon was an inhabitant of the island of Samos. During Æsop's servitude with this master, he had a fellow-servant called Rhodopis, who some affirm was his wife.* This does not at all appear credible, for there is no mention made of this among the Greek writers. This Rhodopis became afterwards very famous for her riches, and was cele-

* Pliny.

brated all over Greece. Idmon is said to have been so well pleased with Æsop, that after he had been some time in his service, he emancipated him, and made him free. With the enjoyment of liberty, he acquired new reputation, and became celebrated for his wisdom. He is by some compared to the Seven Sages of Greece, and accounted their equal in wisdom. He had the honour to be acquainted with Solon and Chilo, and was equally admitted with them in the Court of Periander, the King of the Corinthians, who was himself one of the Sages of Greece. He was much esteemed by Crœsus, King of Lydia, and received into his Court at Sardis. During his residence at Sardis, he gave proofs of his sagacity which astonished the courtiers of Crœsus. This ambitious Prince having one day shewn his wise men his vast riches and magnificence, and the glory and splendour of his court, asked them the question, whom they thought the happiest man? After several different answers given by all the wise men present, it came at last to Æsop to make his reply, who said: *That Crœsus was as much happier than other men as the fulness of the sea was superior to the rivers.* Whether this was spoken ironically or in earnest does not appear so evident; but according to the severe morality of Æsop, it would rather appear to be a sarcasm, though it was otherwise understood by the King, and received as the greatest compliment. It wrought so much upon his vanity, that he exclaimed: *The Phrygian had hit the mark.* One thing which renders it probable that Æsop flattered Crœsus on

this occasion is his conversation with Solon, who at this time departed from the court of the King of Lydia. When they were upon the road, Æsop exclaims: *O Solon! either we must not speak to Kings, or we must say what will please them.* Solon replied: *We should either not speak to Kings at all, or we should give them good advice, and speak truth.* This seems to be one instance in which Æsop is charged with flattery and dissimulation. Some writers praise him for his complaisance to so great a Prince; but it is rather a proof of his policy than his ordinary strictness and integrity. There is another instance recorded by some writers of the life of Æsop, of his complaisance to Princes, even contrary to the liberties of the people. He is said to have written a Fable in favour of the tyrant Pisistratus, which Phædrus has translated, and proves that he was reconciled to tyranny. But this is no way evident. There are many Fables which are mingled with those of Æsop, which are not his, yet have been fathered upon him; and it is not consistent with the other parts of his character and writings to suppose that he would either flatter tyrants or defend them. The authorities from whence these supposed facts are taken are not to be depended upon.

In all other particulars he appears to have proceeded upon the principles of wisdom, as far as any of the Sages of Greece. When he was asked by Chilo, one of the wise men, *What God was doing?* He replied, with great adroitness, *That he was humbling the proud and exalting the humble.* He had just

views of human nature, and assigned true reasons for all its Phænomena. In an account of the paintings in the time of the Antonines, Philostratus informs us, that there is one of Æsop which makes a principal figure. The painter represents him before his own house, with the geniuses approaching him with a sort of adulating pleasure as the inventor of Fables: they are painted as adorning him with wreaths and chaplets of flowers, and crowning him with olive branches. His countenance appears in a smiling attitude, while his eyes seem fixed towards the ground, as if composing a Fable, with the same gaiety and good humour with which he usually wrote. There is a group of men and beasts placed around him, and amongst the rest the Fox, which makes a capital figure, as he does in the Fables. This picture does not represent Æsop in a decrepit form, but sets him forth with a mixture of gravity and good humour. The image of his mind is well drawn by Plutarch in his *Feast of the Sages at the court of Periander*, who himself was one of the Seven. It was at this feast that Æsop repeats his Fable of *The Wolf and the Shepherds*, to shew that the company were guilty of the same fault. From Plutarch's account it is manifest that Æsop's conversation was pleasant and witty, but yet delicate. He was satirical without disobliging, and the poignancy of his wit was smoothed with good nature and good sense.

The writer of his life prefixed to Dodsley's Fables compares him to Dean Swift, but with very little propriety; for he has a delicacy in all his wit which

the Dean of St Patrick's was a total stranger to; and, what is more strange, he had nearly as much Christianity.

It has been doubted if he was the inventor of Fables; but it is certain he was the first that brought that species of writing into reputation. Archilochus is said to have written Fables one hundred years before him;* but it would appear that those stories were not written for posterity like those of Æsop. The Fables of Æsop were written in prose, though the images that are in them afford good scope for a poet, of which Phædrus has given an elegant specimen. Æsop writes with great simplicity, elegance, and neatness; the schemes of his Fables are natural, the sentiments just, and the conclusions moral. Quintilian recommends his Fables as a first book for children;† and, when Plato had sent all the poets into exile, he allows Æsop a residence in his commonwealth.‡ The Athenians were good judges of literary merit, and erected a noble statue for Æsop, to perpetuate his memory, which was sculped by the famous Lysippus.

The great excellency of Æsop's manner of writing is, that he blends the pleasing and the instructive so well as to instruct and please at once. Horace is much indebted to him for a plan of writing, and has formed a rule from this famous Fabulist:

> Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci;
> Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.
>
> —*De Arte Poet.* ver. 343.

* Priscian. † Institut. Orat. i. c. 9. ‡ De Repub. Lib. ii.

I wish I could conceal the exit of this great Fabulist and Moral Writer. He was accused by the Delphians of sacrilege, and convicted by an act of the greatest villany that ever was invented. They concealed among his baggage, at his departure, some golden vessels consecrated to Apollo, and then dispatched messengers to search his baggage. Upon this he was accused of theft and sacrilege, condemned, and precipitated over a rock. Thus ended the famous Æsop, whose Fables have immortalised his memory, and will hand down his name to the latest posterity.

———o———

AN ESSAY UPON FABLE.

FABLE is the method of conveying truth under the form of an Allegory. The sense of a Fable is entirely different from the literal meaning of the words that are used to compose it; and yet the real intention thereof is visible and manifest, otherwise the Fable is not well composed. The sense of a Fable of the moral kind ought always to be obvious at first view, that the instruction intended to be given may have as early an effect as possible.

The chief thing to be considered in a Fable is the *action,* which conveys the moral or truth designed for instruction. There ought only to be one action in a Fable, which must appear through the whole; otherwise it will be liable to admit of different interpretations, and be the same as a riddle, and have no effect. *Clearness, Unity, and Probability,* are inci-

dents essentially necessary in a moral Fable. If a Fable be not so plain as to point out the sense of the writer clearly, but admit of different interpretations, it does not answer the true design thereof. If the incidents tend to convey different ideas, then the reader will be at a loss to understand the chief intention of the author. All the various incidents ought manifestly to unite in one design, and point out one clear and perspicuous truth. Many of the modern Fables labour under this defect; the incidents do not manifestly tend to point out the moral. Fontaine's Fable of the two pigeons, and Croxall's story of the coach-wheel, are of this sort.

The incidents of a Fable ought also to have *a real foundation in nature.* This rule may be infringed by ascribing to creatures appetites and passions that are not consistent with their known characters. "A Fox should not be said to long for Grapes."* The rule of Horace will hold universally—

> Sed non ut placidis cœant immitia : non ut
> Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.
> Delphinum Sylvis appingit Fluctibus aprum.
>
> —HORACE, l. 13.

* This alludes to the well-known Fable of *The Fox and the Grapes*, which, however absurd it may appear in this part of the world, is not so in the East, for Dr Hasselquist, in his Travels, p. 184, observes, that "the Fox is an animal common in *Palestine*, and that there is plenty of them near the convent of St John in the Desert about vintage time ; and they destroy all the vines unless they are strictly watched." To the same effect *Solomon* saith in the *Canticles*, ii. 15, "*Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes that spoil the vines : for our vines have tender grapes.*" Therefore this ancient Apologue is very properly restored, without prejudice to nature or common sense.

> To join the wild with creatures that are tame,
> Serpents with birds, or tygers with the lamb,
> Paint whales in woods, and wild boars in the sea,
> Ah, what a motley piece the whole would be!

Creatures different in their nature must not be associated in a just Fable. The Lamb must not be made to travel with the Fox, nor the Wolf and the Sheep to feed or associate together; for all this is unnatural, and can never be rendered a *probable* object of belief. The incidents in a Fable ought also to be few, lest by crowding circumstances too close, the whole appear confused, and perplex the mind.

The next thing to be considered in Fable is the *imagery* or *characters;* these may either be men, beasts, or inanimate beings. All these have been introduced by the ancient Fabulists. In all personifications the rules of analogy are to be observed; in those things wherein man and other creatures have no similitude, no true image can be formed in what respects human society. The persons and characters assumed in Fables, ought therefore to have a likeness to the things to which they are compared. All nature may serve to furnish a Fabulist with machinery. Mountains, rivers, trees, animals, and even invisible powers may answer his purpose; but, in the use of all sorts of machinery, a proper regard must always be held to analogy. When language is attributed to animals, they must not be made to speak in a style which bears no similitude to some property in their nature; an owl must not be made to sing like a nightingale; nor should a raven be made the symbol

of an orator. When beasts are made the representations of men, there ought always to be something in their nature that bears a similitude to their character. The same may be said of things inanimate; a strong man may be compared to a mountain, but it would be preposterous to make the same comparison of a dwarf. Vices and virtues ought in the same manner to be delineated in Fable; a proud man may be compared to a high hill, a humble person to a low valley. This is authorised by the writings of the Old Testament: *The high mountains shall be brought low, and every valley shall be exalted.*

When human actions are attributed to invisible powers, or especially to the Deity, they ought to be such as are worthy of those ideas which are generally received concerning him. In this, Homer is very faulty; for he exalts his men almost to Gods, and brings down his Gods to the level of beasts.

As for the style of Fable, simplicity is the greatest excellence; that familiar manner of speech in which we converse is best suited for the purposes of Fable. This manner of writing is more difficult to attain than is generally imagined; it requires a particular taste, and is harder to imitate than the sublime itself. The style of a Fable must always be adapted to the characters which are introduced: for it would be absurd to make the eagle speak in the same style with the bat; or the King of the forest express himself in the language of the mouse. But in all these particulars, nature will be the best guide; and where this is deficient, no art can supply the want of it.

FABLES, *&c.*

—o—

Fable I.

The Miller, his Son, and their Ass.

'Tis better to pursue the dictates of one's own reason, than attempt to please all mankind.

A MILLER and his Son were driving their Ass to market, in order to sell him: and that he might get thither fresh and in good condition, they drove him on gently before them. They had not proceeded far, when they met a company of

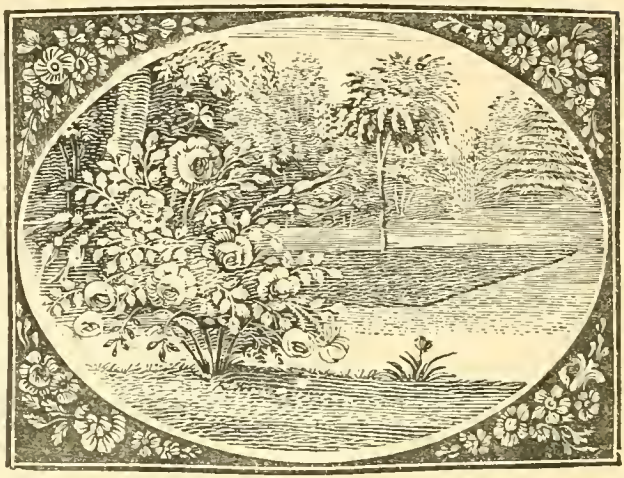
travellers. Sure, say they, you are mighty careful of your Ass: methinks, one of you might as well get up and ride, as suffer him to walk on at his ease, while you trudge after on foot. In compliance with this advice, the Old Man set his Son upon the beast. And now, they had scarce advanced a quarter of a mile farther, before they met another company. You idle young rogue, said one of the party, why don't you get down and let your poor Father ride? Upon this, the Old Man made his Son dismount, and got up himself. While they were marching in this manner, a third company began to insult the Father. You hard-hearted unnatural wretch, say they, how can you suffer that poor lad to wade through the dirt, while you, like an alderman, ride at your ease? The good-natured Miller stood corrected, and immediately took his Son up behind him. And now the next man they met exclaimed, with more vehemence and indignation than all the rest—Was there ever such a couple of lazy boobies! to overload in so unconscionable a manner a poor dumb creature, who is far less able to carry them than they are to carry him! The complying Old Man would have been half inclined to make the trial, had not experience by this time sufficiently convinced him, that there cannot be a more fruitless attempt than to endeavour to please all mankind.

Fable II.

The Fox and the Bramble.

We should bear with patience a small evil, when it is connected with a greater good.

A FOX closely pursued by a pack of dogs took shelter under the covert of a Bramble. He rejoiced in this asylum, and for a while was very happy: but soon found, that if he attempted to stir, he was wounded by thorns and prickles on every side. However, making a virtue of necessity, he forbore to complain; and comforted himself with reflecting, that no bliss is perfect; that good and evil are mixed, and flow from the same fountain. These briars indeed, said he, will tear my skin a little, yet they keep off the dogs. For the sake of the good, then, let me bear the evil with patience: each bitter has its sweet, and these brambles, though they wound my flesh, preserve my life from danger.



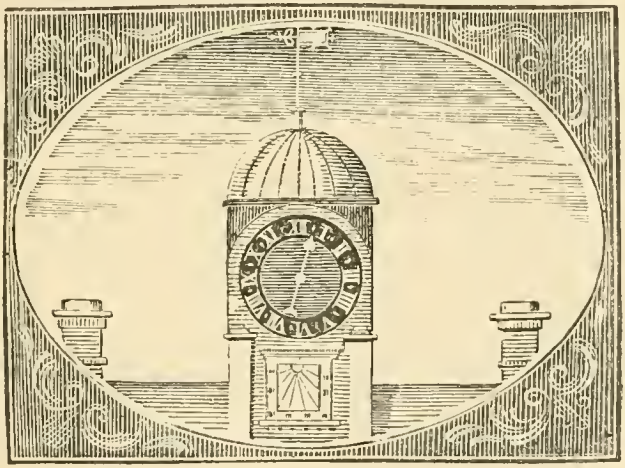
FABLE III.

The Butterfly and the Rose.

We exclaim loudly against that inconstancy in another to which we give occasion by our own.

A FINE powdered Butterfly fell in love with a beautiful Rose, who expanded her charms in a neighbouring parterre. Matters were soon adjusted between them, and they mutually vowed eternal fidelity. The Butterfly, perfectly satisfied with the success of his amour, took a tender leave of his mistress, and did not return again till noon. What! said the Rose, when she saw him approaching, is the ardent passion you vowed so soon extinguished? It is an age since you paid me a visit. But no wonder: for I observed you courting by turns every flower in the garden. You little coquet, replied the Butterfly, it well becomes *you*, truly, to reproach me with my gallantries; when in fact I only copy the example

which you yourself have set me. For, not to mention the satisfaction with which you admitted the kisses of the fragrant Zephyr, did I not see you displaying your charms to the bee, the fly, the wasp, and, in short, encouraging and receiving the addresses of every buzzing insect that fluttered within your view? If you will be a coquet, you must expect to find me inconstant.



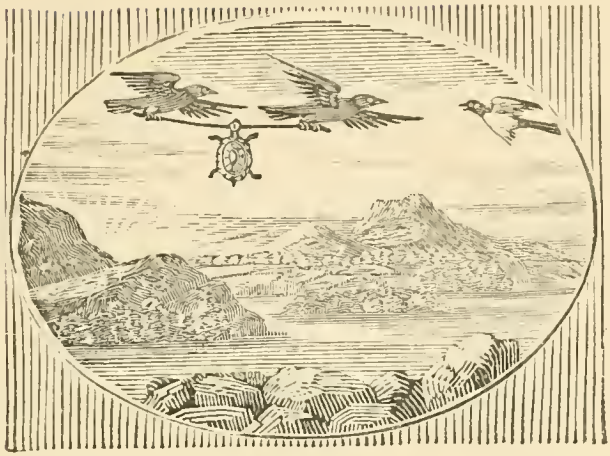
FABLE IV.

The Clock and the Dial.

There is no absolute independency in the world; every one depends in his station upon some above him, and that if this order was taken away, there would be nothing except error and confusion in the universe.

A CLOCK, which served for many years to repeat the hours and point out time, happened to fall into conversation with a Dial, which also served

when the sun shone, to tell what was the time of day. It happened to be in a cloudy forenoon, when the sun did not shine. Says the Clock to the Dial, What a mean slavery do you undergo! you cannot tell the hour without the sun pleases to inform you; and now the half of the day is past, and you know not what o'clock it is. I can tell the hour at any time, and would not be in such a dependent state as you are in for the world. Night and day are both alike to me. It is just now twelve o'clock. Upon this the sun shone forth from under the cloud, and showed the exact time of the day. It was half an hour past twelve. The Dial then replied to the Clock, You may now perceive that boasting is not good; for you see you are wrong. It is better to be under direction and follow truth, than to be eye to one's self and go wrong; your freedom is only a liberty to err; and what you call slavery in my case, is the only method of being freely in the right. You see that we should all of us keep our stations, and depend upon one another. I depend upon the sun, and you depend upon me; for if I did not serve to regulate your motions, you see you would for ever go wrong.



Fable V.

The Tortoise and the Two Crows.

Curiosity often excites those people to hazardous undertakings, whom vanity and indiscretion render totally unfit for them.

VANITY and idle curiosity are qualities which generally prove destructive to those who suffer themselves to be governed by them.

A Tortoise, weary of passing her days in the same obscure corner, conceived a wonderful inclination to visit foreign countries. Two Crows, whom the simple Tortoise acquainted with her intention, undertook to oblige her upon the occasion. Accordingly, they told her, that if she would fasten her mouth to the middle of a pole, they would take the two ends, and transport her whithersoever she chose to be conveyed. The Tortoise approved of the expedient; and every-

thing being prepared, the Crows began their flight with her. They had not travelled long in the air, when they were met by a Magpie, who inquiring what they were bearing along, they replied the queen of the Tortoises. The Tortoise, vain of the new and unmerited appellation, was going to confirm the title, when, opening her mouth for that purpose, she let go her hold, and was dashed to pieces by her fall.

FABLE VI.

The Country Maid and the Milk-Pail.

When we dwell much on distant and chimerical advantages, we neglect our present business, and are exposed to real misfortunes.

WHEN men suffer their imagination to amuse them with the prospect of distant and uncertain improvements of their condition, they fre-

quently sustain real losses by their inattention to those affairs in which they are immediately concerned.

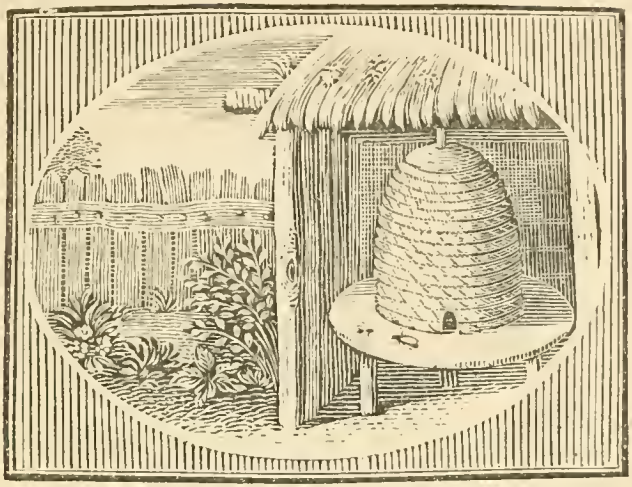
A Country Maid was walking very deliberately with a pail of milk upon her head, when she fell into the following train of reflections:—The money for which I shall sell this milk, will enable me to increase my stock of eggs to three hundred. These eggs, allowing for what may prove addle, and what may be destroyed by vermin, will produce at least two hundred and fifty chickens. The chickens will be fit to carry to market about Christmas, when poultry always bear a good price, so that by May-day I cannot fail of having money enough to purchase a gown. Green!—let me consider—yes, green becomes my complexion best, and green it shall be. In this dress I will go to the fair, where all the young fellows will strive to have me for a partner; but I shall perhaps refuse every one of them, and with an air of disdain toss from them. Transported with this triumphant thought, she could not forbear acting with her head what thus passed in her imagination, when down came the pail of milk, and with it all her imaginary happiness.

FABLE VII.

The Spider and the Silkworm.

He that is employed in works of use generally advantages himself or others; while he who toils alone for fame must often expect to lose his labour.

HOW vainly we promise ourselves that our flimsy productions will be rewarded with immortal honour! A Spider, busied in spreading his web from one side of a room to the other, was asked by an industrious Silkworm, to what end he spent so much time and labour, in making such a number of lines and circles? The Spider angrily replied, Do not disturb me, thou ignorant thing: I transmit my ingenuity to posterity, and fame is the object of my wishes. Just as he had spoken, a chambermaid, coming into the room to feed her Silkworms, saw the Spider at his work, and with one stroke of her broom, swept him away, and destroyed at once his labours and his hope of fame.



FABLE VIII.

The Bee and the Fly.

The greatest genius with a vindictive temper is far surpast in point of happiness by men of talents less considerable.

A BEE, observing a Fly frisking about her hive, asked him, in a very passionate tone, what he did there? Is it for such scoundrels as you, said she, to intrude into the company of the queens of the air? You have great reason, truly, replied the Fly, to be out of humour. I am sure they must be mad who would have any concern with so quarrelsome a nation. And why so? thou saucy malapert, returned the enraged Bee; we have the best laws, and are governed by the best policy in the world. We feed upon the most fragrant flowers, and all our business is to make honey: honey which equals nectar, thou tasteless wretch, who livest upon nothing but putrefaction and

excrement. We live as we can, rejoined the Fly. Poverty, I hope, is no crime; but passion is one, I am sure. The honey you make is sweet, I grant you; but your heart is all bitterness: for to be revenged on an enemy, you will destroy your own life; and are so inconsiderate in your rage, as to do more mischief to yourselves than to your adversary. Take my word for it, one had better have less considerable talents, and use them with more discretion.

FABLE IX.

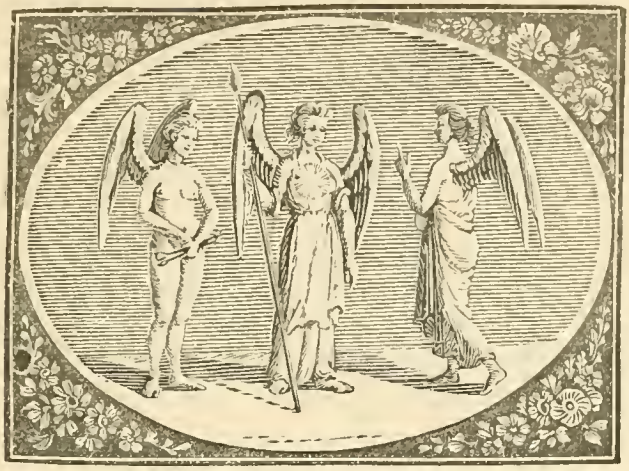
The Huron and the Frenchman.

Custom has a mighty effect upon mankind, and more differences arise in character from custom than from natural causes. Perhaps all men are in the state they should be in; they should therefore live contented.

AN airy Frenchman happened to meet a Huron upon the Mississippi, as he went with his bow and shafts to seek provision for his family. Says

Monsieur to the savage, You have a very toilsome life of it, who, when other people sit by the fireside, enjoying the benefit of good food and good company, are obliged to traverse the woods in the midst of snow and storms to preserve a wretched existence. How come you by your food? replies the Huron. Does it rain from the clouds to you? No, says the Frenchman; we work in summer, and make provision for winter, and, during the cold months, sit by the fire and enjoy ourselves. For the same reason, says the Huron, do we lay up provisions in winter, that we may rest in summer when the days are hot. Your enjoyments are confined within the walls of a house, and by the side of a fire, but ours are more extensive; we assemble upon the mountains and in the woods in summer for pleasure, and our delights are to observe the works of nature; the sun serves us instead of fire to warm us, and we are never at a loss for houses while the woods remain. This is the season when we lay up our store, and it serves us in summer till winter return. We are accustomed to endure the cold, and our exercise keeps us from feeling it to excess. At night the skins of wild beasts keep us from the cold till the morning dawn, and then we pursue the same employments. Were we not to live in this manner, the wild beasts would so increase, that they would become our masters; but our necessity of having food and clothing prevents them from increasing to very great numbers. What you account pleasure, would be none to us; and your manner of life appears as ridiculous to the Hurons, as ours appears to you.

You reckon us idolaters, because we pay adoration to the rising sun; but you misunderstand us; we consider that light to be a symbol of the great Author of Nature, and only worship him through this luminary. We do not understand your manner of worship, which to us appears abundantly absurd; for the Deity is no more like images of gold and silver, than he is like the sun. The sun is a more glorious effect of his power and goodness; for he serves many excellent purposes, and we could not live without him; but your symbols appear to have no use. The Frenchman could make no reply, and the Huron proceeded on his hunting.



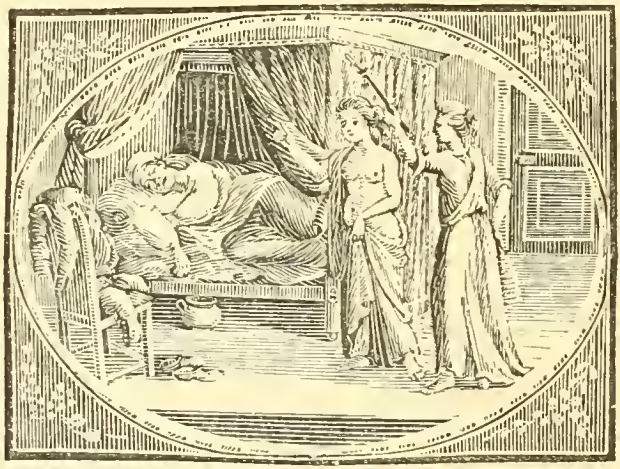
Fable X.

Genius, Virtue, and Reputation.

There are few things so irreparably lost as Reputation.

GENIUS, Virtue, and Reputation, three intimate friends, agreed to travel over the island of Great Britain, to see whatever might be worthy of observation. But as some misfortune, said they, may happen to separate us, let us consider before we set set out by what means we may find each other again. Should it be my ill fate, said Genius, to be severed from you, my associates—which Heaven forbid!—you may find me kneeling in devotion before the tomb of Shakespear, or rapt in some grove where Milton talked with angels, or musing in the grotto where Pope caught inspiration. Virtue, with a sigh, acknowledged that her friends were not very numerous: but were I to lose you, she cried, with whom I am at present so happily united, I should choose to

take sanctuary in the temples of religion, in the places of royalty, or in the stately domes of ministers of state; but as it may be my ill-fortune to be there denied admittance, inquire for some cottage where contentment has a bower, and there you will certainly find me. Ah! my dear companions, said Reputation, very earnestly, you, I perceive, when missing, may possibly be recovered; but take care, I entreat you, always to keep sight of me, for if I am once lost, I am never to be retrieved.



FABLE XI.

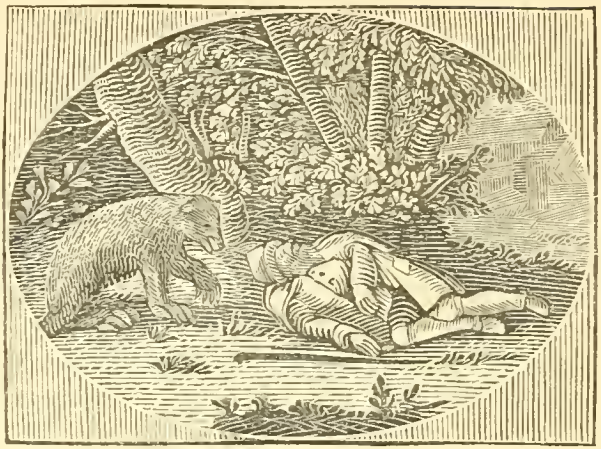
Industry and Sloth.

Our term of life does not allow time for long protracted deliberations.

HOW many live in the world as useless as if they had never been born! They pass through life like a bird through the air, and leave no track

behind them; waste the prime of their days in deliberating what they shall do, and bring them to a period without coming to any determination.

An indolent young man, being asked why he lay in bed so long, jocosely and carelessly answered, Every morning of my life I am hearing causes. I have two fine girls, their names are Industry and Sloth, close at my bed-side as soon as ever I awake, pressing their different suits. One intreats me to get up, the other persuades me to lie still; and then they alternately give me various reasons why I should rise, and why I should not. This detains me so long, as it is the duty of an impartial judge to hear all that can be said on either side, that before the pleadings are over, it is time to go to dinner.



FABLE XII.

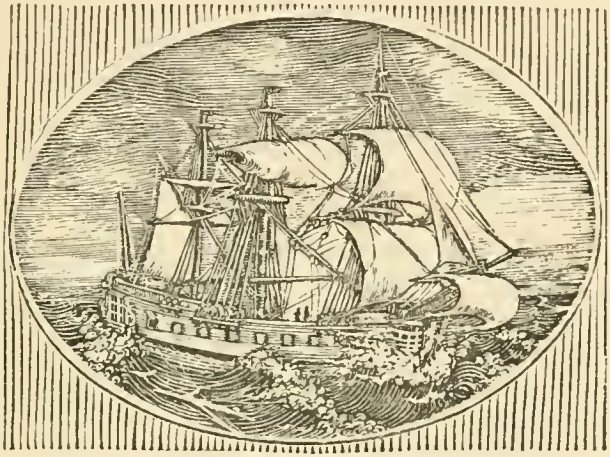
The Hermit and the Bear.

The random zeal of inconsiderate friends is often as hurtful as the wrath of enemies.

AN imprudent friend often does as much mischief by his too great zeal as the worst enemy could effect by his malice.

A certain Hermit having done a good office to a Bear, the grateful creature was so sensible of his obligation, that he begged to be admitted as the guardian and companion of his solitude. The Hermit willingly accepted his offer, and conducted him to his cell, where they passed their time together in an amicable manner. One very hot day, the Hermit having laid him down to sleep, the officious Bear employed himself in driving away the flies from his patron's face. But in spite of all his care, one of the flies perpetually returned to the attack, and at last settled upon the

Hermit's nose. Now I shall have you most certainly, said the Bear; and with the best intentions imaginable, gave him a violent blow on the face, which very effectually indeed demolished the Fly, but at the same time most terribly bruised the face of his benefactor.



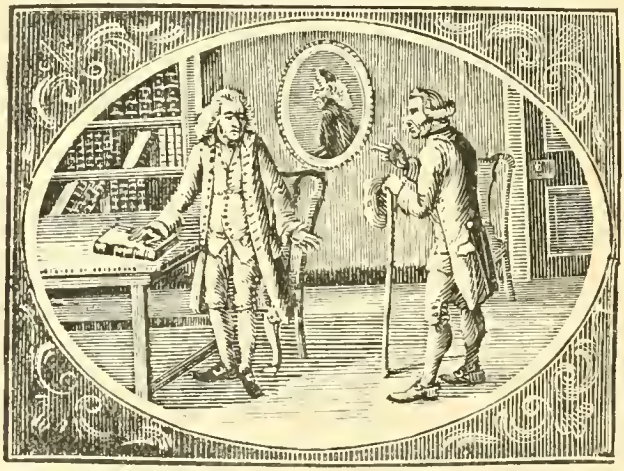
Fable XIII.

The Passenger and the Pilot.

We are nowhere out of the reach of Providence, either to punish or to protect us.

IT had blown a violent storm at sea, and the whole crew of a large vessel were in imminent danger of shipwreck. After the rolling of the waves were somewhat abated, a certain Passenger, who had never been at sea before, observing the Pilot to have appeared wholly unconcerned, even in their greatest danger, had the curiosity to ask him what death his father died. What death? said the Pilot; why he

perished at Sea, as my grandfather did before him. And are you not afraid of trusting yourself to an element that has thus proved fatal to your family? Afraid!—by no means. Why we must all die: is not your father dead? Yes, but he died in his bed. And why then are you not afraid of trusting yourself to your bed? Because I am there perfectly secure. It may be so, replied the Pilot; but if the hand of Providence is equally extended over all places, there is no more reason for me to be afraid of going to sea than for you to be afraid of going to bed.



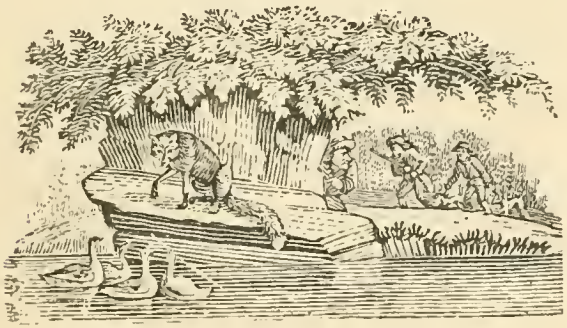
FABLE XIV.

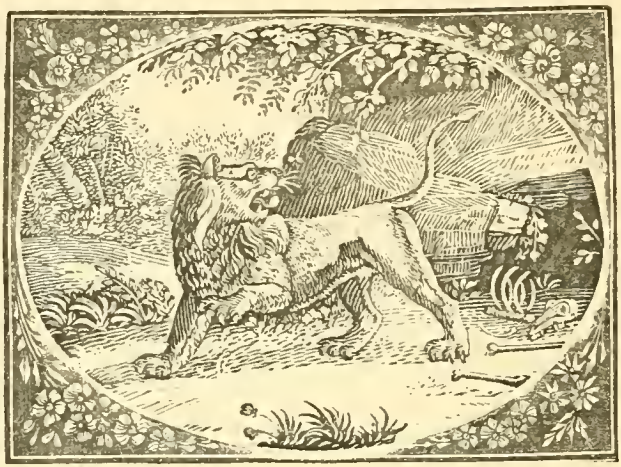
The Partial Judge.

The injuries we do, and those we suffer, are seldom weighed in the same scales.

A FARMER came to a neighbouring Lawyer expressing great concern for an accident which he said had just happened. One of your oxen, con-

tinued he, has been gored by an unlucky bull of mine, and I shall be glad to know how I am to make you a reparation. Thou art a very honest fellow, replied the Lawyer, and wilt not think it unreasonable that I expect one of thy oxen in return. It is no more than justice, quoth the Farmer, to be sure; but what did I say?—I mistake: it is your bull that has killed one of my oxen. Indeed! says the Lawyer; that alters the case: I must inquire into the affair; and if—— And *if!* said the Farmer; the business I find would have been concluded without an *if*, had you been as ready to do justice to others as to exact it from them.





FABLE XV.

The Lion and the Gnat.

Little minds are so much elevated by any advantage gained over their superiors, that they are often thrown off their guard against a sudden change of fortune.

AVAUNT! thou paltry contemptible insect! said a proud Lion one day to a Gnat that was frisking about in the air near his den. The Gnat, enraged at this unprovoked insult, vowed revenge, and immediately darted into the Lion's ear. After having sufficiently teased him in that quarter, she quitted her station and retired under his belly, and from thence made her last and most formidable attack in his nostrils, where stinging him almost to madness, the Lion at length fell down, utterly spent with rage, vexation, and pain. The Gnat having thus abundantly gratified her resentment, flew off in great exultation; but in the heedless transports of her

success, not sufficiently attending to her own security, she found herself unexpectedly entangled in the web of a spider; who, rushing out instantly upon her, put an end to her triumph and her life.

This fable instructs us, never to suffer success so far to transport us as to throw us off our guard against a reverse of fortune.

FABLE XVI.

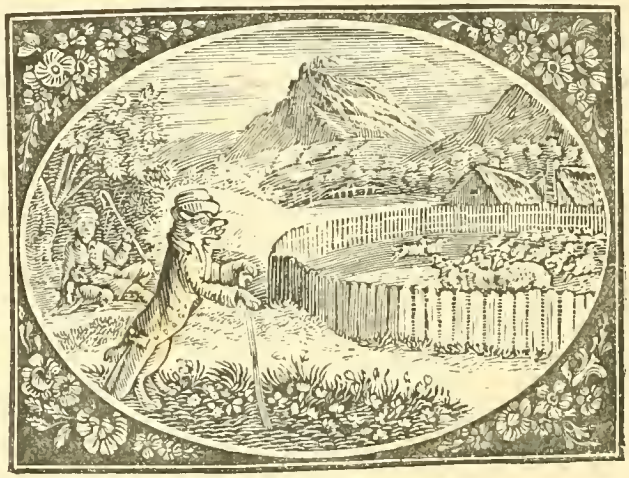
The Dog and the Crocodile.

It is ever dangerous to be long conversant with persons of a bad character.

WE can never be too carefully guarded against a connection with persons of an ill character.

As a dog was coursing on the banks of the Nile, he grew thirsty; but fearing to be seized by the monsters of that river, he would not stop to satiate his draught, but lapped as he ran. A Crocodile,

raising his head above the surface of the water, asked him, why he was in such a hurry. He had often, he said, wished for his acquaintance, and should be glad to embrace the present opportunity. You do me great honour, returned the Dog, but it is to avoid such companions as you that I am in so much haste.



FABLE XVII.

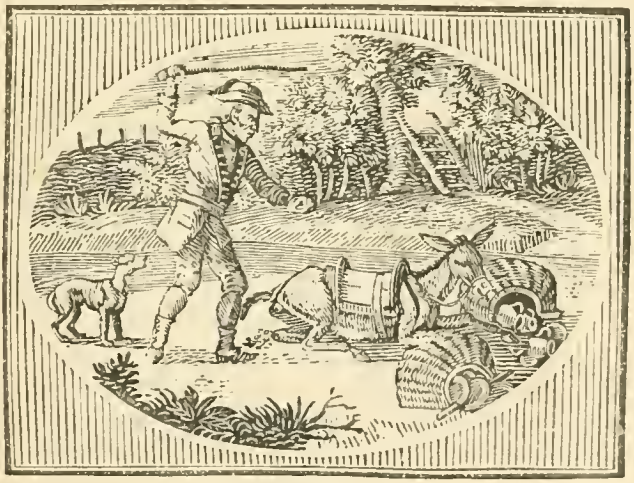
The Wolf in Disguise.

There would be little chance of detecting hypocrisy, were it not always addicted to over-act its part.

DESIGNING hypocrites frequently lay themselves open to discovery by over-acting their parts.

A Wolf, who by frequent visits to a flock of sheep in his neighbourhood, began to be extremely well known to them, thought it expedient, for the more successfully carrying on his depredations, to appear

in a new character. To this end he disguised himself in a shepherd's habit; and resting his fore-feet upon a stick, which served him by way of crook, he softly made his approaches towards the fold. It happened that the shepherd and his dog were both of them extended on the grass fast asleep; so that he would certainly have succeeded in his project, if he had not imprudently attempted to imitate the shepherd's voice. The horrid noise awakened them both: when the Wolf, encumbered with his disguise, and finding it impossible either to resist or to flee, yielded up his life an easy prey to the shepherd's dog.



Fable XVIII.

The Ass and his Master.

Avarice often misses its point, through the means it uses to secure it.

A DILIGENT Ass, daily loaded beyond his strength by a severe Master, whom he had long served, and who kept him at very short com-

mons, happened one day in his old age to be oppressed with a more than ordinary burthen of earthenware. His strength being much impaired, and the road deep and uneven, he unfortunately made a trip, and, unable to recover himself, fell down and broke all the vessels to pieces. His Master, transported with rage, began to beat him most unmercifully. Against whom the poor Ass, lifting up his head as he lay on the ground, thus strongly remonstrated: Unfeeling wretch! to thy own avaricious cruelty, in first pinching me of food, and then loading me beyond my strength, thou owest the misfortune which thou so unjustly imputest to me.

Fable XIX.

The Eagle and the Crow.

A false estimate of our own abilities ever exposes us to ridicule, and sometimes to danger.

TO mistake our own talents, or over-rate our abilities, is always ridiculous, and sometimes dangerous.

An Eagle, from the top of a high mountain, making a stoop at a lamb, pounced upon it, and bore it away to her young. A Crow, who had built her nest in a cedar near the foot of the rock, observing what passed, was ambitious of performing the same exploit; and darting from her nest, fixed her talons in the fleece of another lamb. But neither able to move her prey, nor to disentangle her feet, she was taken by the shepherd, and carried away for his children to play with; who eagerly enquiring what bird it was:

—An hour ago, said he, she fancied herself an eagle; however, I suppose she is by this time convinced that she is but a crow.

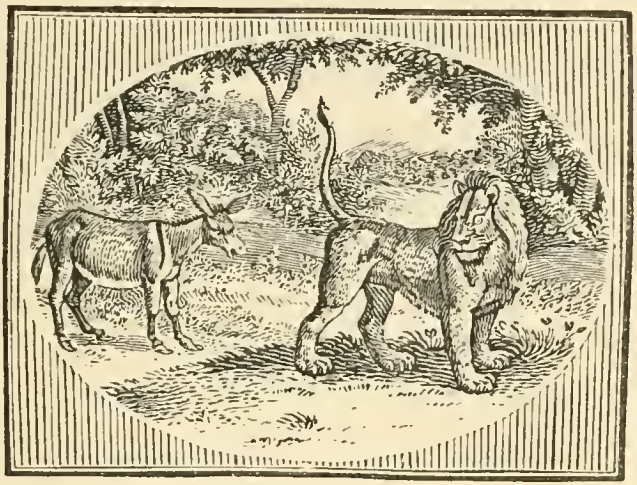
FABLE XX.

The Lion, the Tyger, and the Fox.

The intemperate rage of clients gives the lawyer an opportunity of seizing the property in dispute.

A LION and a Tyger jointly seized on a young fawn, which they immediately killed. This they had no sooner performed than they fell a fighting, in order to decide whose property it should be. The battle was so bloody and so obstinate that they were both compelled, through weariness and loss of blood, to desist; and lay down by mutual consent, totally disabled. At this instant, a Fox unluckily came by; who, perceiving their situation, made bold to seize the contested prey, and bore it off unmolested.

As soon as the Lion could recover his breath,—How foolish, said he, has been our conduct! Instead of being contented, as we ought, with our respective shares, our senseless rage has rendered us unable to prevent this rascally Fox from defrauding us of the whole.



Fable XXI.

The Lion and the Ass.

A total neglect is the best return the generous can make to the scurrility of the base.

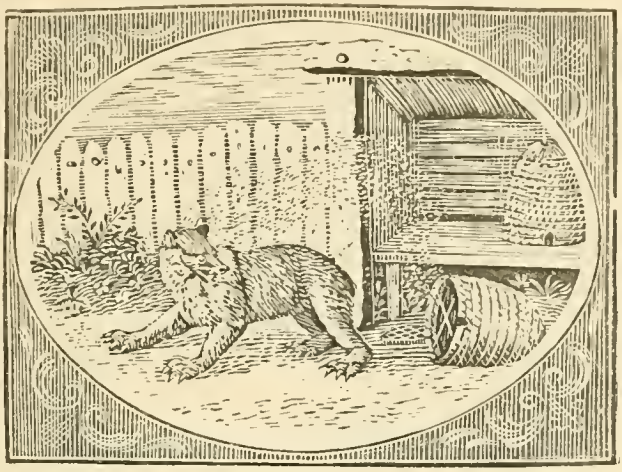
A CONCEITED Ass had once the impertinence to bray forth some contemptuous speeches against the Lion. The suddenness of the insult at first raised some emotions of wrath in his breast; but turning his head, and perceiving from whence it came, they immediately subsided, and he very sedately walked on, without deigning to honour the contemptible creature even so much as with an angry word.

FABLE XXII.

The Trumpeter.

The fomenter of mischief is at least as culpable as he who puts it in execution.

A TRUMPETER in a certain army happened to be taken prisoner. He was ordered immediately to execution; but pleaded, in excuse for himself, that it was unjust a person should suffer death, who, far from an intention of mischief, did not even wear an offensive weapon. So much the rather, replied one of the enemy, shalt thou die; since without any design of fighting thyself, thou excitest others to the bloody business: for he that is the abetter of a bad action, is at least equally guilty with him that commits it.

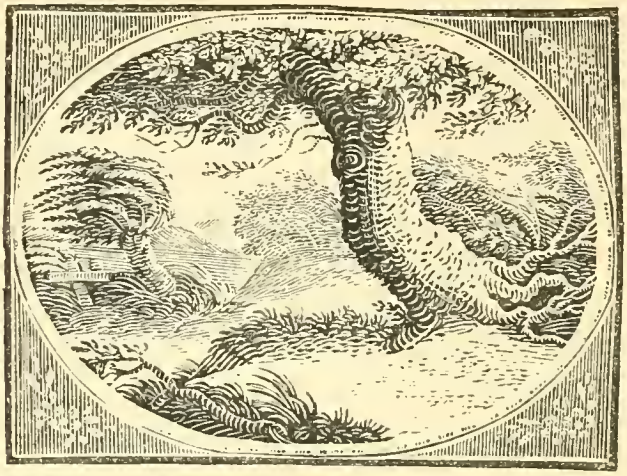


Fable XXIII.

The Bear and the Bees.

It were more prudent to acquiesce under an injury from a single person, than by an act of vengeance to bring upon us the resentment of a whole community.

A BEAR happened to be stung by a Bee, and the pain was so acute, that in the madness of revenge he ran into the garden and overturned the hive. This outrage provoked their anger to a high degree, and brought the fury of the whole swarm upon him. They attacked him with such violence, that his life was in danger, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he made his escape, wounded from head to tail. In this desperate condition, lamenting his misfortunes, and licking his sores, he could not forbear reflecting how much more advisable it had been to have patiently acquiesced under one injury, than thus by an unprofitable resentment to have provoked a thousand.



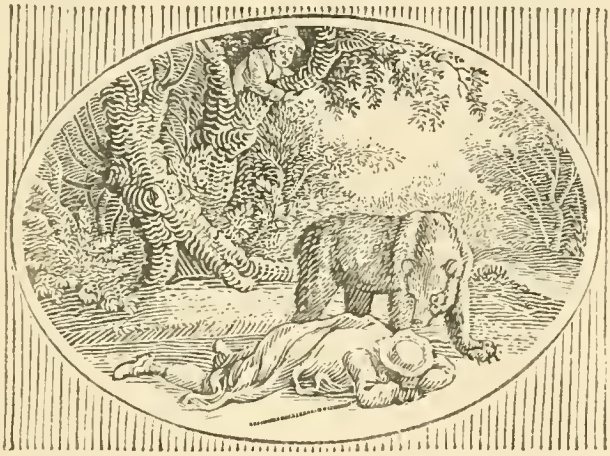
FABLE XXIV.

The Oak and the Willow.

The courage of meeting death in an honourable cause is more commendable, than any address or artifice we can make use of to evade it.

A CONCEITED Willow had once the vanity to challenge his mighty neighbour the Oak to a trial of strength. It was to be determined by the next storm; and Æolus was addressed by both parties to exert his most powerful efforts. This was no sooner asked than granted; and a violent hurricane arose, when the pliant Willow, bending from the blast, or shrinking under her, evaded all its force, while the generous Oak, disdaining to give way, opposed its fury, and was torn up by the roots. Immediately the Willow began to exult, and to claim the victory, when thus the fallen Oak interrupted his exultation: Callest

thou this a trial of strength? Poor wretch! not to thy strength, but weakness; not to thy boldly facing danger, but meanly skulking from it, thou owest thy present safety. I am an Oak, though fallen; thou still a Willow, though unhurt: but who, except so mean a wretch as thyself, would prefer an ignominious life, preserved by craft or cowardice, to the glory of meeting death in an honourable cause?



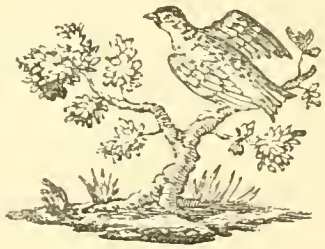
FABLE XXV.

The Bear and the Two Friends.

Cowards are incapable of true Friendship.

TWO Friends, setting out together upon a journey which led through a dangerous forest, mutually promised to assist each other if they should happen to be assaulted. They had not proceeded far before they perceived a Bear making towards them with

great rage. There were no hopes in flight; but one of them, being very active, sprung up into a tree; upon which the other, throwing himself flat on the ground, held his breath, and pretended to be dead, remembering to have heard it asserted that this creature will not prey upon a dead carcase. The Bear came up, and after smelling to him for some time, left him, and went on. When he was fairly out of sight and hearing, the hero from the tree calls out —Well, my friend, what said the Bear? He seemed to whisper you very closely. He did so, replied the other, and gave me this good piece of advice: Never to associate with a wretch who in the hour of danger will desert his friend.



Fable XXVI.

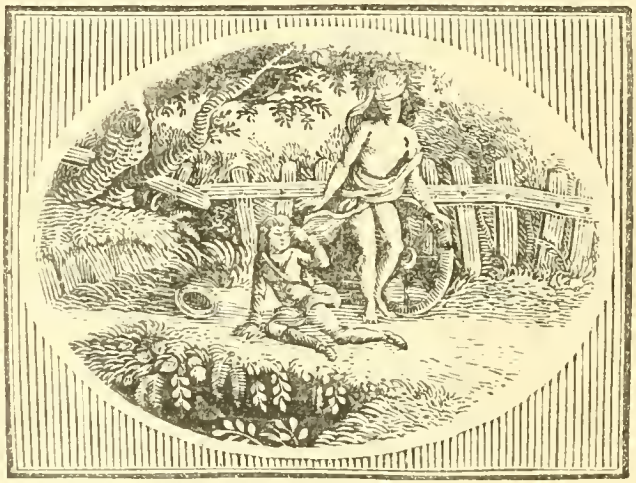
The Wasps and the Bees.

It is a folly to arrogate works to ourselves of which we are by no means capable.

PRETENDERS of every kind are best detected by appealing to their works.

Some honeycombs being claimed by a swarm of Wasps, the right owners protested against their demand, and the cause was referred to a Hornet. Witnesses being examined, they deposed that certain winged creatures, who had a loud hum, were of a yellowish colour, and somewhat like bees, were observed a considerable time hovering about the place where this nest was found. But this did not sufficiently decide the question; for these characteristics, the Hornet observed, agreed no less with the Bees than with the Wasps. At length a sensible old Bee offered to put the matter upon this decisive issue: Let a

place be appointed by the court, said he, for the plaintiffs and defendants to work in. It will then soon appear which of us are capable of forming such regular cells, and afterwards of filling them with so delicious a fluid. The Wasps refusing to agree to this proposal, sufficiently convinced the judge on which side the right lay, and he decreed the honey-combs accordingly.



FABLE XXVII.

Fortune and the School-boy.

We are always ready to censure Fortune for the ill effects of our own carelessness.

A SCHOOL-BOY, fatigued with play, threw himself down by the brink of a deep pit, where he fell fast asleep. Fortune happening to pass by, saw him in this dangerous situation, and kindly gave him a tap on the shoulder: My dear child, said she, if you

had fallen into this pit, I should have borne the blame; though in fact the accident would have been wholly owing to your own carelessness.

Misfortune, said a celebrated Cardinal, is but another word for imprudence. The maxim is by no means absolutely true: certain, however, it is, that mankind suffer more evils from their own imprudence, than from events which it is not in their power to controul.

Fable XXVIII.

The Belly and the Limbs.

It is a folly even to wish to withhold our part from the support of civil government.

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, a Roman Consul, being deputed by the senate to appease a dangerous tumult and sedition of the people, who refused to pay

the taxes necessary for carrying on the business of the state, convinced them of their folly by delivering to them the following fable:—

My friends and countrymen, said he, attend to my words. It once happened that the Members of the human body, taking some exception at the conduct of the Belly, resolved no longer to grant him the usual supplies. The Tongue first, in a seditious speech, aggravated their grievances; and after highly extolling the activity and diligence of the Hands and Feet, set forth how hard and unreasonable it was that the fruits of their labour should be squandered away upon the insatiable cravings of a fat and indolent Paunch, which was entirely useless, and unable to do anything towards helping himself. This speech was received with unanimous applause by all the Members. Immediately the Hands declared they would work no more; the Feet determined to carry no further the load of guts with which they had hitherto been oppressed; nay, the very Teeth refused to prepare a single morsel more for his use. In this distress, the Belly bethought them to consider maturely, and not foment so senseless a rebellion. There is none of you, says he, can be ignorant that whatsoever you bestow upon me is immediately converted to your use, and dispersed by me for the good of you all into every Limb. But he remonstrated in vain; for during the clamours of passion, the voice of reason is always disregarded. It being therefore impossible for him to quiet the tumult, he starved for want of their assistance, and the body wasted away to a skeleton.

The Limbs, grown weak and languid, were sensible at last of their error, and would fain have returned to their respective duties; but it was now too late, death had taken possession of the whole, and they all perished together.

FABLE XXIX.

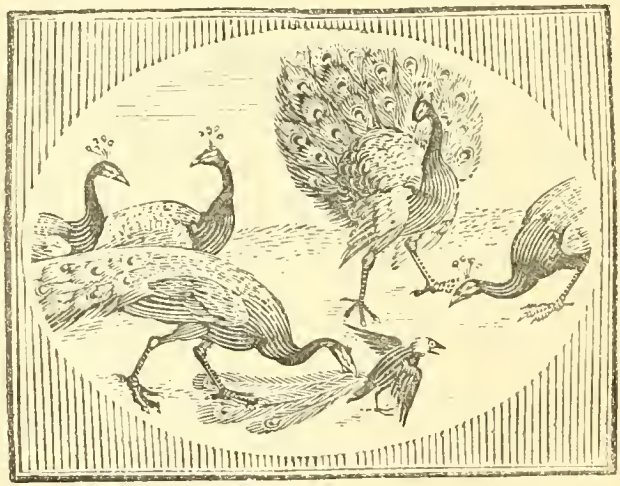
The Wolf and the Lamb.

They who do not feel the sentiments of humanity will seldom listen to the pleas of reason.

WHEN cruelty and injustice are armed with power, and determined on oppression, the strongest pleas of innocence are preferred in vain.

A Wolf and a Lamb were accidentally quenching their thirst together at the same rivulet. The Wolf stood towards the head of the stream, and the Lamb at some distance below. The injurious beast, resolved on a quarrel, fiercely demands—How dare you dis-

turb the water which I am drinking? The poor Lamb, all trembling, replies, How, I beseech you, can that possibly be the case, since the current sets from you to me? Disconcerted by the force of truth, he changes the accusation. Six months ago, says he, you vilely slandered me. Impossible, returns the Lamb, for I was not then born. No matter, it was your father, then, or some of your relations; and immediately seizing the innocent Lamb, he tore him to pieces.



FABLE XXX.

The Daw with Borrowed Feathers.

To aim at figure by the means either of borrowed wit, or borrowed money, generally subjects us at least to tenfold ridicule.

WHEN a pert young Templar or city apprentice sets up for a fine gentleman, with the assistance of an embroidered waistcoat and Dresden ruffles,

but without one qualification proper to the character, how frequently does it happen that he is laughed at by his equals, and despised by those whom he presumed to imitate!

A pragmatic Jackdaw was vain enough to imagine that he wanted nothing but the coloured plumes to render him as elegant a bird as the Peacock. Puffed up with this wise conceit, he dressed himself with a sufficient quantity of their most beautiful feathers, and in this borrowed garb, forsaking his old companions, endeavoured to pass for a Peacock; but he no sooner attempted to associate with these genteel creatures, than an affected strut betrayed the vain pretender. The offended Peacocks, plucking from him their degraded feathers, soon stripped him of his finery, reduced him to a mere Jackdaw, and drove him back to his brethren, by whom he was now equally despised, and justly punished with derision and contempt.

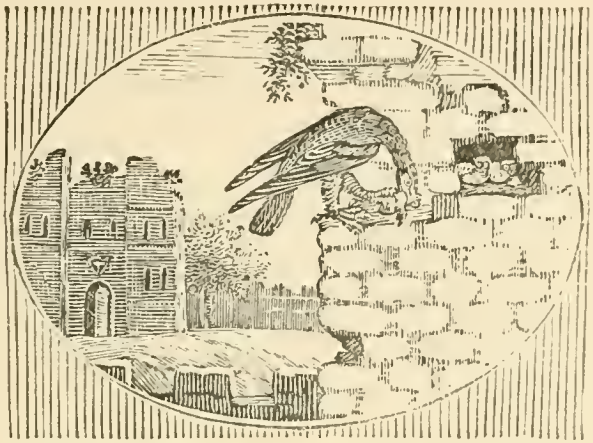
FABLE XXXI.

The Wolf and the Shepherds.

We severely censure that in others, which we ourselves practise without scruple.

HOW apt are men to condemn in others what they practise themselves without scruple!

A Wolf, says Plutarch, peeping into a hut where a company of Shepherds were regaling themselves with a joint of mutton; Lord, said he, what a clamour would these men have raised if they had catched *me* at such a banquet!



FABLE XXXII.

The Eagle and the Owl.

The partiality of parents often makes themselves ridiculous, and their children unhappy.

AN Eagle and an Owl having entered into a league of mutual amity, one of the articles of their treaty was, that the former should not prey upon the younglings of the latter. But tell me, said the Owl, should you know my little ones if you were to see them? Indeed I should not, replied the Eagle; but if you describe them to me, it will be sufficient. You are to observe, then, returned the Owl, in the first place, that the charming creatures are perfectly well shaped; in the next, that there is a remarkable sweetness and vivacity in their countenances; and then there is something in their voices so peculiarly melodious. It is enough, interrupted the Eagle; by these marks I cannot fail of distinguishing them; and

you may depend upon their never receiving any injury from me. It happened, not long afterwards, as the Eagle was upon the wing in quest of his prey, that he discovered amidst the ruins of an old castle a nest of grim-faced ugly birds, with gloomy countenances, and a voice like that of the Furies. These, undoubtedly, said he, cannot be the offspring of my friend, and so I shall venture to make free with them. He had scarce finished his repast and departed, when the Owl returned; who, finding nothing of her brood remaining but some fragments of the mangled carcases, broke out into the most bitter exclamations against the cruel and perfidious author of her calamity. A neighbouring Bat, who overheard her lamentations, and had been witness to what had passed between her and the Eagle, very gravely told her that she had nobody to blame for this misfortune but herself, whose blind prejudices in favour of her children had prompted her to give such a description of them as did not resemble them in any one single feature or quality.

Parents should very carefully guard against that weak partiality towards their children which renders them blind to their failings and imperfections, as no disposition is more likely to prove prejudicial to their future welfare.

Fable XXXIII.

The Sick Lion, the Fox, and the Wolf.

Men who meditate mischief, suggest the same to others: and generally pay dear for their froward gratifications.

A LION, having surfeited himself with feasting too luxuriously on the carcase of a wild boar, was seized with a violent and dangerous disorder. The beasts of the forest flocked in great numbers to pay their respects to him upon the occasion, and scarce one was absent except the Fox. The Wolf, an ill-natured and malicious beast, seized this opportunity to accuse the Fox of pride, ingratitude, and disaffection to his majesty. In the midst of his invective, the Fox entered; who having heard part of the Wolf's accusation, and observing the Lion's countenance to be kindled into wrath, thus adroitly excused himself, and retorted upon his accuser: I see

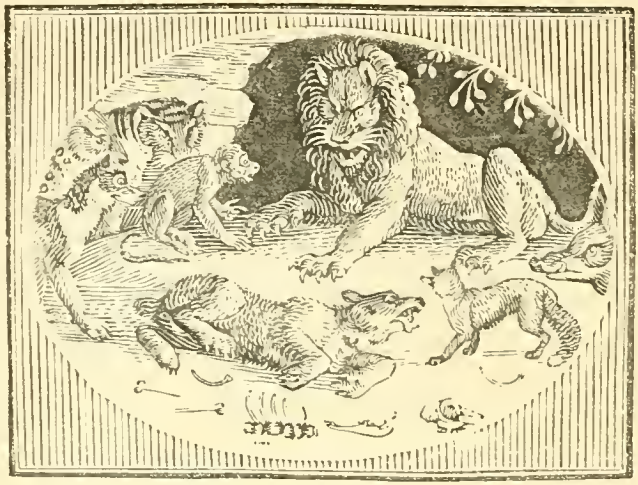
many here who with mere lip service have pretended to shew you their loyalty ; but for my part, from the moment I heard of your majesty's illness, neglecting useless compliments, I employed myself day and night to enquire among the most learned physicians an infallible remedy for your disease, and have at length happily been informed of one. It is a plaister made of part of a Wolf's skin, taken warm from his back, and laid to your majesty's stomach. This remedy was no sooner proposed than it was determined that the experiment should be tried ; and whilst the operation was performing, the Fox, with a sarcastic smile, whispered this useful maxim in the Wolf's ear—If you would be safe from harm yourself, learn for the future not to meditate mischief against others.

FABLE XXXIV.

The Blind Man and the Lame.

The wants and weaknesses of individuals form the connections of society.

A BLIND man, being stopped in a bad piece of road, meets with a Lame man, and intreats him to guide him through the difficulty he was got into. How can I do that, replied the Lame man, since I am scarce able to drag myself along? But as you appear to be very strong, if you will carry me, we will seek our fortunes together. It will then be my interest to warn you of anything that may obstruct your way; your feet shall be my feet, and my eyes yours. With all my heart, returned the Blind Man; let us render each other our mutual services. So taking his lame companion on his back, they by means of their union travelled on with safety and pleasure.



FABLE XXXV.

The Lion, the Bear, the Monkey, and the Fox.

It is often more prudent to suppress our sentiments than either to flatter or to rail.

THE Tyrant of the forest issued a proclamation, commanding all his subjects to repair immediately to his royal den. Among the rest the Bear made his appearance; but pretending to be offended with the steams which issued from the monarch's apartments, he was imprudent enough to hold his nose in his majesty's presence. This insolence was so highly resented, that the Lion in a rage laid him dead at his feet. The Monkey, observing what had passed, trembled for his carcase; and attempted to conciliate favour by the most abject flattery. He began with protesting, that for his part he thought the apartments were perfumed with Arabian spices; and exclaiming against the rudeness of the Bear, admired the beauty of his majesty's paws, so happily

formed, he said, to correct the insolence of clowns. This fulsome adulation, instead of being received as he expected, proved no less offensive than the rudeness of the Bear; and the courtly Monkey was in like manner extended by the side of Sir Bruin. And now his majesty cast his eye upon the Fox. Well, Reynard, said he, and what scent do you discover here? Great prince, replied the cautious Fox, my nose was never esteemed my most distinguishing sense; and at present I would by no means venture to give my opinion, as I have unfortunately got a terrible cold.

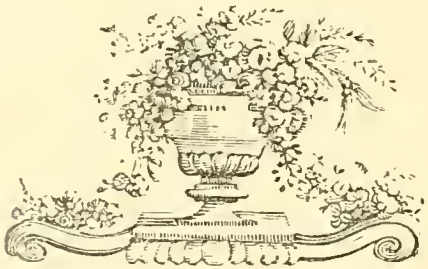
FABLE XXXVI.

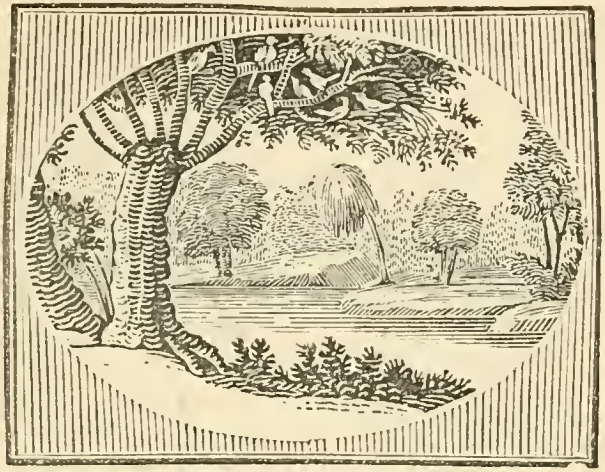
The Two Horses.

The object of our pride is often the cause of our misfortunes.

TWO Horses were travelling the road together; one loaded with a sack of flour, the other with a sum of money. The latter, proud of his splendid

burthen, tossed up his head with an air of conscious superiority, and every now and then cast a look of contempt upon his humble companion. In passing through a wood, they were met by a gang of highwaymen, who immediately seized upon the horse that was carrying the treasure; but the spirited steed not being altogether disposed to stand so quietly as was necessary for their purpose, they beat him most unmercifully, and after plundering him of his boasted load, left him to lament at his leisure the cruel bruises he had received. Friend, said his despised companion to him (who had now reason to triumph in his turn), distinguished posts are often dangerous to those who possess them: if you had served a miller, as I do, you might have travelled the road unmolested.



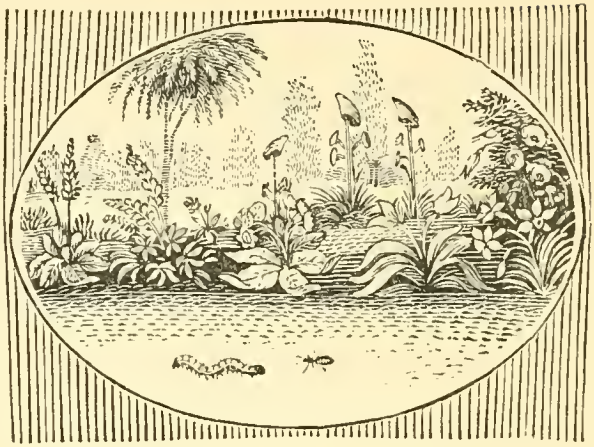


FABLE XXXVII.

The Mock-bird.

Ridicule appears with a very ill grace in persons who possess no one talent beside.

THERE is a certain bird in the West Indies, which has the faculty of mimicking the notes of every other songster, without being able himself to add any original strains to the concert. As one of these Mock-birds was displaying his talent of ridicule among the branches of a venerable wood: 'Tis very well, said a little warbler, speaking in the name of all the rest; we grant you that our music is not without its faults: but why will you not favour us with a strain of your own?



FABLE XXXVIII.

The Ant and the Caterpillar.

Boys of no very promising appearance often become the greatest men.

AS a Caterpillar was advancing very slowly along one of the alleys of a beautiful garden, he was met by a pert lively Ant, who tossing up her head with a scornful air, cried, Prithee get out of the way, thou poor creeping animal, and do not presume to obstruct the paths of thy superiors, by wriggling along the road, and besmearing the walks appropriated to their footsteps. Poor creature! thou lookest like a thing half-made, which Nature not liking threw by unfinished. I could almost pity thee, methinks; but it is beneath one of my quality to talk to such mean creatures as thou art: and so, poor crawling wretch, adieu.

The humble Caterpillar, struck dumb with this disdainful language, retired, went to work, wound himself up in a silken cell, and at the appointed time

came out a beautiful Butterfly. Just as he was sallying forth, he observed the scornful Ant passing by. Proud insect, said he, stop a moment, and learn from the circumstances in which you now see me, never to despise any one for that condition in which Providence has thought fit to place him; as there is none so mean but may one day, either in this state or in a better, be exalted above those who looked down upon him with unmerited contempt.

FABLE XXXIX.

The Two Lizards.

The superior safety of an obscure and humble station, is a balance for the honours of high and envied life.

AS two Lizards were basking under a south wall, How contemptible, said one of them, is our condition! We exist, 'tis true, but that is all: for we hold no sort of rank in the creation, and are utterly unnoticed by the world. Cursed obscurity!

Why was I not rather born a stag, to range at large, the pride and glory of some royal forest? It happened, that in the midst of these unjust murmurs, a pack of hounds was heard in full cry after the very creature he was envying, who, being quite spent with the chase, was torn in pieces by the dogs in sight of our two Lizards. And is this the lordly stag, whose place in the creation you wish to hold? said the wiser Lizard to his complaining friend: Let his sad fate teach you to bless Providence for placing you in that humble situation, which secures you from the dangers of a more elevated rank.

FABLE XL.

Jupiter's Lottery.

Folly, passing with men for wisdom, makes each contented with his own share of understanding.

JUPITER, in order to please mankind, directed Mercury to give notice that he had established a Lottery, in which there were no blanks; and that

amongst a variety of other valuable chances, Wisdom was the highest prize. It was Jupiter's command, that in this Lottery some of the gods should also become adventurers. The tickets being disposed of, and the wheels placed, Mercury was employed to preside at the drawing. It happened that the best prize fell to Minerva: upon which a general murmur ran through the assembly, and hints were thrown out that Jupiter had used some unfair practices to secure this desirable lot to his daughter. Jupiter, that he might at once both punish and silence these impious clamours of the human race, presented them with Folly in the place of Wisdom; with which they went away perfectly well contented. And from that time the greatest Fools have always looked upon themselves as the wisest men.

FABLE XLI.

The Snipe Shooter.

We often miss our point by dividing our attention.

AS a sportsman ranged the fields with his gun, attended by an experienced old Spaniel, he happened to spring a Snipe; and almost at the same instant, a covey of Partridges. Surprised at the accident, and divided in his aim, he let fly too indeterminately, and by this means missed them *both*. Ah, my good master, said the Spaniel, you should never have two aims at once. Had you not been dazzled and seduced by the luxurious hope of Partridge, you would most probably have secured your Snipe.

FABLE XLII.

The Two Dogs.

Our own moderation will not secure us from disturbance, if we connect ourselves with men of turbulent and litigious dispositions.

HASTY and inconsiderate connections are generally attended with great disadvantages: and much of every man's good or ill fortune depends upon the choice he makes of his friends.

A good-natured Spaniel overtook a surly Mastiff, as he was travelling upon the high road. Tray, although an entire stranger to Tyger, very civilly accosted him: And if it would be no interruption, he said, he should be glad to bear him company on his way. Tyger, who happened not to be altogether in so growling a mood as usual, accepted the proposal; and they very amicably pursued their journey together. In the midst of their conversation they arrived at the next village, where Tyger began to

display his malignant disposition, by an unprovoked attack upon every dog he met. The villagers immediately sallied forth with great indignation to rescue their respective favourites; and falling upon our two friends without distinction or mercy, poor Tray was most cruelly treated, for no other reason but his being found in bad company.

FABLE XLIII.

The Trouts and the Gudgeon.

A person can hardly be deemed too cautious, where the first mistake is irretrievable, or fatal.

A FISHERMAN in the month of May stood angling on the banks of the Thames with an artificial fly. He threw his bait with so much art, that a young Trout was rushing towards it, when she was prevented by her mother. Never, said she, my child, be too precipitate, where there is a possibility of danger. Take due time to consider, before

you risk an action that *may* be fatal. How know you whether yon appearance be *indeed* a fly, or the snare of an enemy? Let some one else make the experiment *before* you. If it be a fly, he very probably will elude the first attack: and the second may be made, if not with success, at least with safety. —She had no sooner uttered this caution, than a Gudgeon seized upon the pretended fly, and became an example to the giddy daughter of the great importance of her mother's counsel.

FABLE XLIV.

The Sun and the Wind.

Gentle means, on many occasions, are more effectual than violent ones.

PHŒBUS and Æolus had once a dispute which of them could soonest prevail with a certain traveller to part with his cloak. Æolus began the attack, and assaulted him with great violence. But

the man, wrapping his cloak still closer about him, doubled his efforts to keep it, and went on his way. And now, Phœbus darted his warm insinuating rays, which melting the traveller by degrees, at length obliged him to throw aside that cloak which all the rage of Æolus could not compel him to resign. Learn hence, said Phœbus to the blustering god, that soft and gentle means will often accomplish what force and fury can never effect.

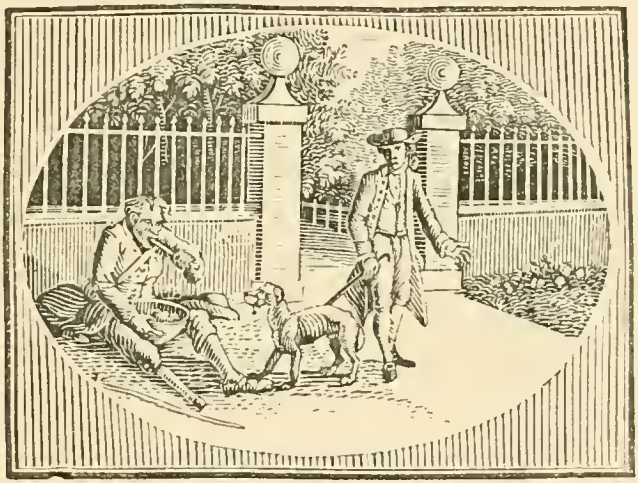
FABLE XLV.

The Boy and the Nettle.

There are certain persons who require to be treated rather with spirit and resolution, than either tenderness or delicacy.

A LITTLE Boy playing in the fields, chanced to be stung by a Nettle, and came crying to his father: he told him, he had been hurt by that nasty weed several times before; that he was always afraid

of it ; and that now he did but just touch it, as lightly as possible, when he was so severely stung. Child, says he, your touching it so gently and timorously is the very *reason* of its hurting you. A Nettle may be handled safely, if you do it with courage and resolution ; if you seize it boldly and gripe it fast, be assured it will never sting you : and you will meet with many sorts of persons, as well as things in the world, which ought to be treated in the very same manner.



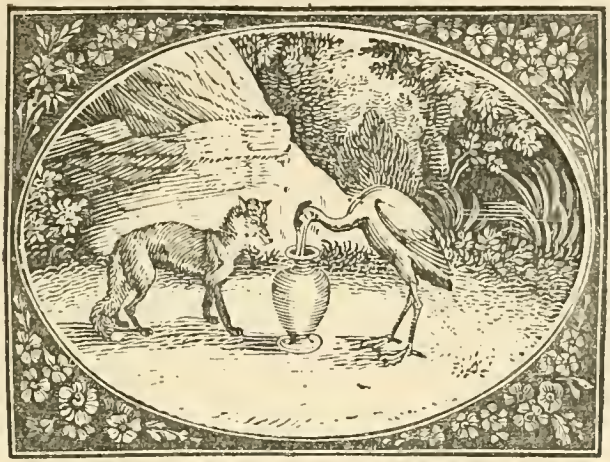
FABLE XLVI.

The Beggar and his Dog.

'Tis misery to depend upon patrons, whose circumstances make their charity necessary at home.

A BEGGAR and his Dog sat at the gate of a noble Courtier, and was preparing to make a meal on a bowl of fragments from the Kitchen-maid. A poor Dependant of his Lordship's, who had been

sharing the singular favour of a dinner at the Steward's table, was struck with the appearance, and stopped a little to observe them. The Beggar, hungry and voracious as any Courtier in Christendom, seized with greediness the choicest morsels, and swallowed them himself; the residue was divided into portions for his children. A scrag was thrust into one pocket for honest Jack, a crust into another for bashful Tom, and a luncheon of cheese was wrapt up with care for the little favourite of his hopeful family. In short, if anything was thrown to the Dog, it was a bone so closely picked, that it scarce afforded a pittance to keep life and soul together. How exactly alike, said the Dependant, is this poor Dog's case and mine! He is watching for a dinner from a master who cannot spare it; I for a place from a needy Lord, whose wants perhaps are greater than my own, and whose relations more clamorous than any of this Beggar's brats. Shrewdly was it said by an ingenious writer, a *Courtier's Dependant* is a *Beggar's Dog*.



Fable XLVII.

The Fox and the Stork.

We should always reflect, before we rally another, whether we can bear to have the jest retorted.

THE Fox, though in general more inclined to roguery than wit, had once a strong inclination to play the wag with his neighbour the Stork. He accordingly invited her to dinner in great form; but when it came upon the table the Stork found it consisted entirely of different soups, served up in broad shallow dishes, so that she could only dip in the end of her bill, but could not possibly satisfy her hunger. The Fox lapped it up very readily, and every now and then, addressing himself to his guest, desired to know how she liked her entertainment; hoped that everything was seasoned to her mind, and protested he was very sorry to see her eat so sparingly. The Stork, perceiving she was

played upon, took no notice of it, but pretended to like every dish extremely; and at parting pressed the Fox so earnestly to return her visit, that he could not in civility refuse. The day arrived, and he repaired to his appointment; but to his great mortification, when dinner appeared, he found it composed of minced meat, served up in long narrow-necked glasses; so that he was only tantalized with the sight of what it was impossible for him to taste. The Stork thrust in her long bill, and helped herself very plentifully; then turning to Reynard, who was eagerly licking the outside of a jar where some sauce had been spilled: I am very glad, said she, smiling, that you seem to have so good an appetite; I hope you will make as hearty a dinner at my table as I did the other day at yours. Reynard hung down his head, and looked very much displeased—— Nay, nay, said the Stork, don't pretend to be out of humour about the matter; they that cannot take a jest should never make one.

Fable XLVIII.

The Trees and the Bramble.

The most worthless persons are generally the most presuming.

THE Israelites, ever murmuring and discontented under the reign of Jehovah, were desirous of having a king, like the rest of the nations. They offered the kingdom to Gideon, their deliverer; to him, and to his posterity after him. He generously refused their offer, and reminded them that Jehovah was their king. When Gideon was dead, Abimelech, his son by a concubine, slew all his other sons to the number of seventy, Jotham alone escaping; and by the assistance of the Shechemites made himself king. Jotham, to represent to them their folly, and to shew them that the most deserving are generally the least ambitious, whereas the worthless grasp at power with eagerness, and exercise it with insolence and tyranny, spake to them in the following manner:

Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, so may God hearken unto you. The Trees, grown weary of the state of freedom and equality in which God had placed them, consulted together to choose and to anoint a king over them; and they said to the Olive-tree, Reign thou over us. But the Olive-tree said unto them, Shall I quit my fatness wherewith God and man is honoured, to disquiet myself with the cares of government, and to rule over the Trees? And they said unto the Fig-tree, Come thou and reign over us. But the Fig-tree said unto them, Shall I bid adieu to my sweetness and my pleasant fruit, to take upon me the painful charge of royalty, and to be set over the Trees? Then said the Trees unto the Vine, Come thou and reign over us. But the Vine said also unto them, Shall I leave my wine which honoureth God and cheereth man, to bring upon myself nothing but trouble and anxiety, and to become king of the Trees? we are happy in our present lot: seek some other to reign over you. Then said all the Trees unto the Bramble. Come thou and reign over us. And the Bramble said unto them, I will be your king; come ye all under my shadow and be safe; obey me, and I will grant you my protection. But if you obey me not, out of the Bramble shall come forth a fire, which shall devour even the cedars of Lebanon.

Part II.

FABLES, *with Reflections.*

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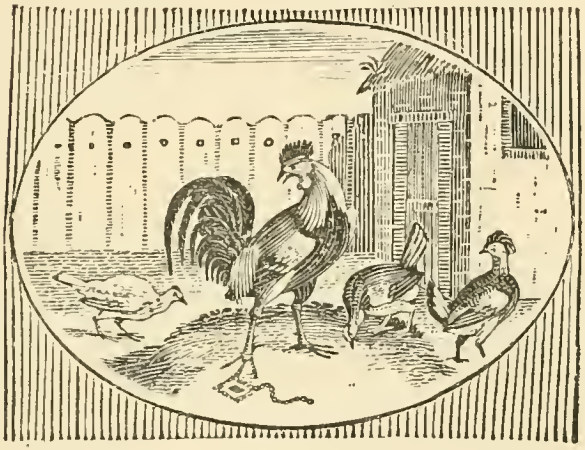


Fable I.

The Cock and the Jewel.

A BRISK young Cock, in company with two or three pullets, his mistresses, raking upon a Dunghill for something to entertain them with, happened to scratch up a jewel. He knew what it was well enough, for it sparkled with an exceeding bright lustre; but, not knowing what to do with it, endeavoured to cover his ignorance under a gay contempt. So, shrugging up his wings, shaking his head, and putting on a grimace, he expressed him-

self to this purpose: Indeed you are a very fine thing; but I know not any business you have here. I make no scruple of declaring that my taste lies quite another way; and I had rather have one grain of dear, delicious barley, than all the jewels under the sun.

MORALS.

Several very pretty fellows, who are as great strangers to the true uses of virtue and knowledge as the Cock upon the Dunghill is to the real value of the Jewel, endeavour to palliate their ignorance by pretending that their taste lies another way.

To fools, the treasures dug from wisdom's mine
Are Jewels thrown to Cocks, and Pearls to Swine.

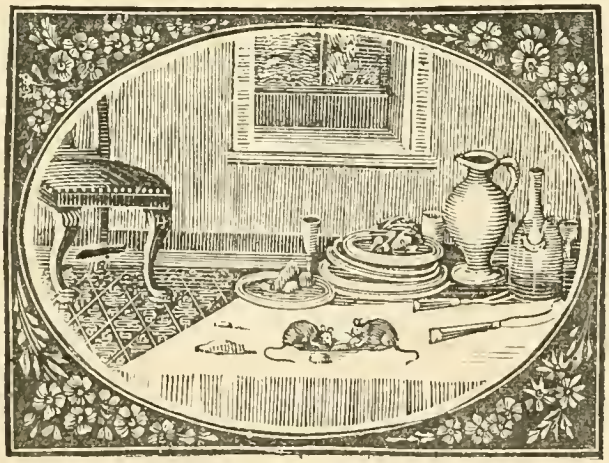
REFLECTION.

There are several people in the world that pass, with some, for well-accomplished gentlemen, and very pretty fellows, though they are as great strangers to the true uses of virtue and knowledge as the Cock upon the Dunghill is to the real value of the Jewel. He palliates his ignorance by pretending that his taste lies another way: But whatever gallant airs people may give themselves upon these occasions, without dispute, the solid advantages of virtue, and the durable pleasures of learning, are as much to be preferred before other objects of the senses as the finest brilliant diamond is above a barley-corn. The greatest blockheads would appear to understand what at the same time they affect to despise; and nobody yet was ever so vicious as to have the impudence to declare in public that virtue was not a fine thing.

But still, among the idle, sauntering, young fellows of the age, who have leisure as well to cultivate and improve the faculties of the mind as to dress and embellish the body, how many are there who spend

their days in raking after new scenes of debauchery, in comparison of those few who know how to relish more reasonable entertainments! Honest, undesigning good sense is so unfashionable, that he must be a bold man who at this time of day attempts to bring it into esteem.

How disappointed is the youth who, in the midst of his amorous pursuits, endeavouring to plunder an outside of bloom and beauty, finds a treasure of impenetrable virtue concealed within! And why may it not be said, how delighted are the fair sex, when, from among a crowd of empty, frolic, conceited admirers, they find out and distinguish, with their good opinion, a man of sense, with a plain, unaffected person, which at first sight they did not like!



FABLE II.

The City Mouse and Country Mouse.

A COUNTRY Mouse invited a City Sister of hers to a collation, where she spared for nothing that the place afforded—as mouldy crusts,

cheese-parings, musty oatmeal, rusty bacon, and the like. The City Dame was too well bred to find fault with her entertainment; but yet represented that such a life was unworthy of a merit like hers; and letting her know how splendidly she lived, invited her to accompany her to town. The Country Mouse consented, and away they trudged together, and about midnight got to their journey's end. The City Mouse shewed her friend the larder, the pantry, the kitchen, and other offices where she laid her stores; and after this, carried her into the parlour, where they found, yet upon the table, the relics of a mighty entertainment of that very night. The City Mouse carved her companion of what she liked best, and so to it they fell upon a velvet couch. The Country Mouse, who had never seen or heard of such doings before, blessed herself at the change of her condition—when, as ill luck would have it, all on a sudden the doors flew open, and in comes a crew of noisy servants of both sexes, to feast upon the dainties that were left. This put the poor mice to their wits' end how to save their skins—the stranger especially, who had never been in such danger before. But she made a shift, however, for the present to slink into a corner, where she lay trembling and panting till the company went away. As soon as ever the house was quiet again: Well, my Court Sister, says she, if this be the sauce to your rich meats, I 'll e'en back to my cottage and my mouldy cheese again; for I had much rather lie nibbling of crusts, without fear or hazard, in my own hole, than

be mistress of all the delicacies in the world, and subject to such terrifying alarms and dangers.

MORALS.

This fable shews the difference between a Court and a Country Life: The delights, innocence, and security of the one, compared with the anxiety, voluptuousness, and hazards of the other.

Heav'n in one mould the kindred fate has cast
Of men of dignity and mice of taste;
Traps, dangers, terrors are alike their lot:
Scar'd if they 'scape, and worry'd if they're caught.

REFLECTION.

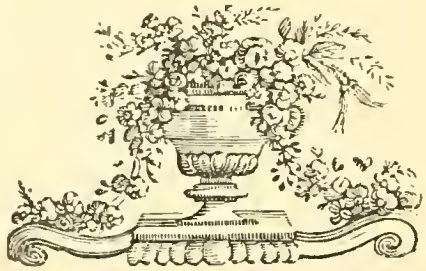
How infinitely superior are the delights of a private life to the noise and bustle of a public one! Innocence, security, meditation, good air, health, and unbroken rest, are the blessings of the one; while the rages of lust and wine, noise, hurry, circumvention, falsehood, treachery, confusion, and ill health, are the constant attendants of the other.

The splendour and luxury of a court are but a poor recompense for the slavish attendances, the invidious competitions, and the mortal disappointments that accompany it. The uncertain favour of Princes, and the envy of those who judge by hearsay or appearance, without either reason or truth, make even the best sort of court lives miserable, to say nothing of the innumerable temptations, vices, and excesses of a life of pomp and pleasure. Let a man but set the pleasing of his palate against the surfeits of gluttony and excess; the starving of his mind against a pampered carcase; the restless importunities of tale-bearers and back-friends against fair words

and professions, only from the teeth outwards; let him, I say, but set the one in balance against the other, and he shall find himself miserable, even in the very height of his delights. To say all in a word: Let him but set the comforts of a life spent in noise, formality, and tumult, against the blessings of a retreat with competency and freedom, and then cast up his account.

What man, then, that is not stark mad, will voluntarily expose himself to the imperious brow-beatings and scorns of great men! To have a dagger struck to his heart in an embrace! To be torn to pieces by calumny; nay, to be a knave in his own defence! For the honester, the more dangerous in a vicious age, and where it is a crime not to be like the company. Men of that character are not to be read and understood by their words, but by their interests; their promises and protestations are no longer binding than while they are profitable to them.

After all, to keep the fable more closely in view, let a man, with the Country Mouse, reflect on the peace and safety of rural retirement, and prefer, if he can, the insecurity, noise, and hurry of a more exalted fortune.



Fable III.

The Fox and the Crow.

A CROW having taken a piece of cheese out of a cottage window, flew up into a high tree with it, in order to eat it. Which a Fox observing, came and sat underneath, and began to compliment the Crow upon the subject of her beauty. I protest, says he, I never observed it before, but your feathers are of a more delicate white than any that ever I saw in my life! Ah! what a fine shape and graceful turn of body is there! And I make no question but you have a tolerable voice. If it is but as fine as your complexion, I do not know a bird that can pretend to stand in competition with you. The Crow, tickled with this very civil language, nestled and wriggled about, and hardly knew where she was; but thinking the Fox a little dubious as to the particular of her voice, and having a mind to set him right in that matter, began to sing, and, in the same instant, let

the cheese drop out of her mouth;—which the Fox presently chopt up, and then bade her remember, that whatever he had said of her beauty, he had spoken nothing yet of her brains.

MORALS.

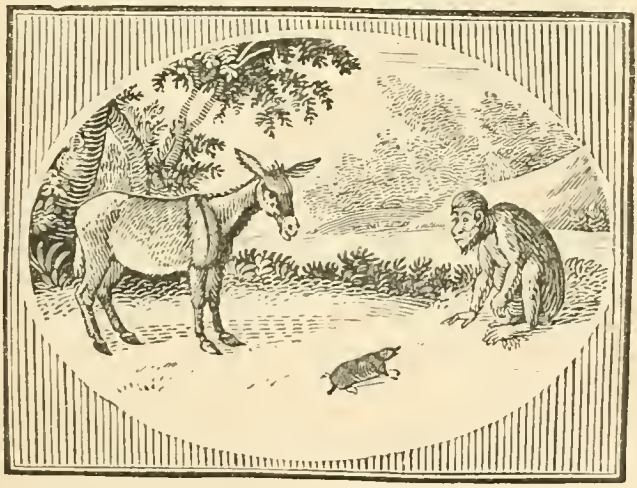
There is hardly any man living that may not be wrought upon more or less by flattery; for we do all of us naturally overween in our own favour. But when it comes to be applied once to a vain fool, there is no end then can be proposed to be attained by it, but may be effected.

"*It is a maxim in the schools,*
That Flattery's the food of fools:"
And whoso likes such airy meat
Will soon have nothing else to eat.

REFLECTION.

Flattery in itself is an unmanly, slavish vice; but it is much worse yet for the alliance it has to hypocrisy; for while we make other people think better of *themselves* than *they* deserve, we make them think better of *us* too than *we* deserve: For self-love and vanity on the one hand, assists the falseness and confidence on the other, while it serves to confirm weak minds in the opinion they had of themselves before, and makes them parties effectually in a conspiracy to their own ruin. The only benefit or good of Flattery is this; that by hearing what we *are not*, we may be instructed what we *ought to be*. Yet how few are there among the whole race of mankind, who may be said to be full proof against its attacks! The gross way by which it is managed by some silly practitioners, is enough to alarm the dullest apprehension, and make it to value itself upon the quickness of its insight into the little plots of this nature. But, let the ambuscade be disposed with due judgment, and it will scarce fail of seizing the most guarded heart. How many are tickled to the last degree with the

pleasure of Flattery, even while they are applauded for their honest detestation of it! There is no way to baffle the force of this engine, but by every one's examining impartially for himself the true estimate of his own qualities: If he deals sincerely in the matter, nobody can tell so well as himself what degree of esteem ought to attend any of his actions; and therefore he should be entirely easy as to the opinion men are like to have of them in the world. If they attribute more to him than is his due, they are either designing or mistaken; if they allow him less, they are envious, or, possibly, still mistaken; and, in either case, are to be despised, or disregarded. For he that flatters without designing to make advantage of it, is a fool: And whoever encourages that Flattery, which he has sense enough to see through, is a vain coxcomb.

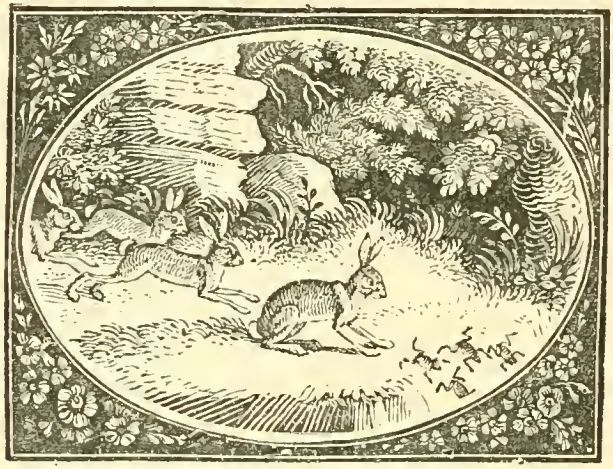


FABLE IV.

An Ass, an Ape, and a Mole.

AN Ass and an Ape were conferring on grievances. The Ass complained mightily for want of horns, and the Ape was as much troubled for

want of a tail. Hold your tongues, both of ye, says the Mole, and be thankful for what you have; for the poor blind Moles are in a worse condition than either of ye.



FABLE V.

The Hares and the Frogs.

ONCE upon a time the Hares found themselves mightily unsatisfied with the miserable condition they lived in. Here we live, says one of them, at the mercy of men, dogs, eagles, and I know not how many other creatures, which prey upon us at pleasure; perpetually in frights, perpetually in danger; and therefore I am absolutely of opinion, that we had better die once for all, than live at this rate in a continual dread that's worse than death itself. The motion was seconded and debated, and a resolution immediately taken, by one and all, to drown themselves. The vote was no sooner passed,

but away they scudded with that determination to the next lake. Upon this hurry there leapt a whole shoal of Frogs from the bank into the water, for fear of the Hares. Nay then, my masters, says one of the gravest of the company, pray let 's have a little patience. Our condition, I find, is not altogether so bad as we fancied it; for there are those, you see, that are as much afraid of us as we are of others.

MORALS of the two Fables.

There is no contending with the Orders and Decrees of Providence. He that makes us, knows what is fittest for us; and every man's own lot (well understood and managed) is undoubtedly the best.

The miseries of half mankind unknown,
Fools vainly think no sorrows like their own:
But view the world, and you will learn to bear
Misfortunes well, since all men have their share.

REFLECTION.

Since nature provides for the necessities of all creatures, and for the well-being of every one in its kind; and since it is not in the power of any creature to make itself other than what by Providence it was designed to be; what a madness is it to wish ourselves other than what we are, and what we must continue to be! Every atom of the creation has its place assigned: every creature has its proper figure, and there is no disputing with Him that made it so. *Why have I not this?* and, *Why have I not that?* are questions for a Philosopher of *Bedlam* to ask; and we may as well cavil at the motions of the heavens, the vicissitude of day and night, and the

succession of the seasons, as expostulate with Providence upon any of the rest of God's works. The *Ass* would have *horns*, the *Ape* would have a *tail*, and the *Hares* would be free from those terrors which, timid as they are, they give to others: but the *Mole* on the one hand, and the *Frogs* on the other, shew that there are others as miserable as themselves.

It may seem to be a kind of a malicious satisfaction that one man derives from the misfortune of another. But the philosophy of this reflection stands upon another ground; for our comfort does not arise from other people being miserable, but from this inference upon the balance, that we suffer only the lot of human nature: and as we are happy or miserable, compared with others; so other people are miserable or happy, compared with us; by which justice of Providence we come to be convinced of the sin, and the mistake, of our ingratitude. What would not a man give to be eased of the gout, or the stone? or, supposing an incurable poverty on the one hand, and an incurable malady on the other, why should not the poor man think himself happier in his rags, than the other in his purple? but the rich man envies the poor man's *health*, without considering his *want;* and the poor man envies the other's *treasure*, without considering his *diseases*. What is an ill name in the world to a good conscience within one's self; and how much less miserable, upon the wheel, is one man that is innocent, than another under the same torture that is guilty? The only way for Hares and Asses, is to be thankful what they are, and what they have, and not to grumble at the lot that they must bear in spite of their teeth.

Fable VI.

An Ant and Fly.

WHERE'S the honour or the pleasure in the world, says the Fly, in a dispute for pre-eminence with the Ant, that I have not my part in? Are not all temples and places open to me? Am not I the taster to gods and princes in all their sacrifices and entertainments? And all this without either money or pains? I trample upon crowns, and kiss what ladies' lips I please. And what have you now to pretend to all this while? Vain boaster! says the Ant, dost thou not know the difference between the access of a *guest*, and that of an *intruder?* for people are so far from liking your company, that they kill you as soon as they catch you. You are a plague to them wherever you come. Your very breath has maggots in it; and for the kiss you brag of, what is it but the perfume of the last dunghill you touched

upon, once removed? For my part, I live upon what 's my own, and work honestly in the summer to maintain myself in the winter; whereas the whole course of your scandalous life is only cheating or sharping one half of the year, and starving the other.

MORALS.

The happiness of life does not lie so much in enjoying small advantages, as in living free from great inconveniences. An honest mediocrity is the happiest state a man can wish for.

Pert coxcombs, pleas'd with buzzing round the fair,
Laugh at the low mechanic's thrifty care;
While he with juster scorn may well deride
Their folly, meanness, indolence, and pride.

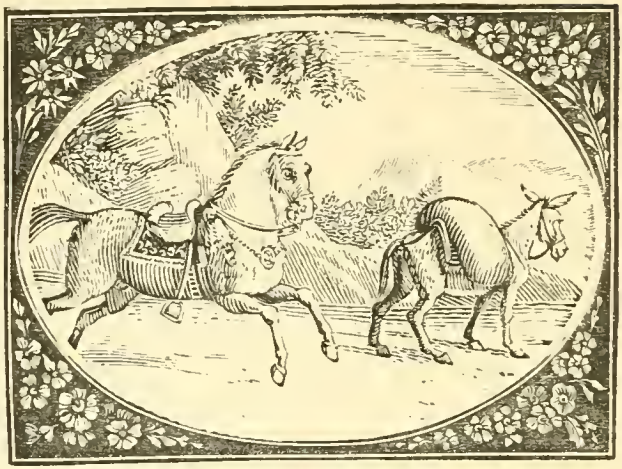
REFLECTION.

This fable marks out to us the difference betwixt the empty vanity or ostentation, and the substantial ornaments of virtue. A man can hardly fancy to himself a truer image of a plain, honest, country simplicity, than the Ant's part of the dialogue in this fable. She takes pains for what she eats; wrongs nobody; and so creates no enemies; she wants nothing; and she boasts of nothing; lives contented with her own, and enjoys all with a good conscience. This emblem recommends to us the blessings of a virtuous privacy, according to the just measures of right nature, and, in few words, comprises the sum of a happy state.

The Fly, on the contrary, leads a lazy, voluptuous, scandalous, sharking life; is hated wherever she comes,

and in perpetual fears and dangers. She justly may be compared with the worthless part of mankind, who pass through the world without being of any service in it; and without acquiring the least reputation, seldom fail of adding pride to all their other failings, and behave with haughtiness and arrogance towards those who contribute to the comfort and happiness of society. They treat industrious persons as wretched drudges, appointed to labour for a poor subsistence; while Heaven has provided everything for their own use, though they of all others least deserve it. But the worthy and industrious may always comfort themselves with this reflection, that the pride and extravagance of these idle creatures will at last bring them to shame and want, while their own honest labours will secure to them a life of plenty and affluence.

It is true she flutters from place to place, from feast to feast, brags of her interest at court, and of ladies' favours: and what is this miserable insect at last, but the very picture of one of our ordinary trencher Esquires, that spends his time in hopping from the table of one great man to that of another, only to pick up scraps of intelligence, and to spoil good company; at other times officiously skipping up and down from levee to levee, and endeavouring to make himself necessary, wherever he thinks fit to be troublesome.



FABLE VII.

A Horse and an Ass.

A PROUD pampered Horse, bedecked with gaudy trappings, met in his course a poor creeping Ass, under a heavy burden, that had chopt into the same track with him. Why, how now, sirrah, says he, do you not see by these arms and trappings to what master I belong? and do you not understand, that when I have that master of mine upon my back, the whole weight of the state rests upon my shoulders? Out of the way, thou slavish insolent animal, or I 'll tread thee to dirt. The wretched Ass immediately slunk aside, with this envious reflection between his teeth, *What would I give to change conditions with that happy creature there!* This fancy would not out of the head of him, till it was his hap, a little while after, to see this very Horse doing drudgery in a common dung-cart. Why, how now, friend, says the Ass, how comes this about? Only the chance of war, says the

other: I was a General's horse, you must know; and my master carried me into a battle, where I was hacked and maimed; and you have here before your eyes the catastrophe of my fortune.

MORALS.

This Fable shews the folly and the fate of pride and arrogance; and the mistake of placing happiness in anything that may be taken away; as also the blessing of freedom in a mean estate.

Proud of the clothes with which you are equipt,
You of your pride may easily be stript.

REFLECTION.

People would never envy the pomp and splendour of greatness, if they did but consider either the cares and dangers that go along with it, or the blessings of peace and security in a middle condition. No man can be truly happy, who is not every hour of his life prepared for the worst that can befall him. Now this is a state of tranquillity never to be attained but by keeping perpetually in our thoughts the certainty of death, and the lubricity of fortune; and by delivering ourselves from the anxiety of hopes and fears.

It falls naturally within the prospect of this fiction to treat of the wickedness of a presumptuous arrogance; the fate that attends it; the rise of it; and the means of either preventing or suppressing it; the folly of it; the wretched and ridiculous estate of a proud man, and the weakness of that envy that is grounded upon the mistaken happiness of human life.

The folly both of the Horse and Ass may be con-

sidered here; the one in placing his happiness upon anything that could be taken away; and the other, in envying that mistaken happiness, under the abuse of the same splendid illusion and imposture. What signify gay furniture, and a pampered carcase, or any other outward appearance, without an intrinsic value of worth and virtue? what signify beauty, strength, youth, fortune, embroidered furniture, gaudy bosses, or any of those temporary and uncertain satisfactions that may be taken from us with the very next breath we draw? what assurance can any man have of a possession that every turn of state, every puff of air, every change of humour, and the least of a million of common casualties, may deprive him of?

Moreover, the envy of the Ass was a double folly; for he mistakes both the Horse's condition and his own. 'Tis madness to envy any creature that may in a moment become miserable, or for any advantage that may in a moment be taken from him. The Ass envies the Horse to-day; and, in some few days more, the Horse comes to envy him: wherefore let no man despair, so long as it is in the power either of death, or of chance, to remove the burden. Nothing but moderation and greatness of mind can make either a prosperous or an adverse fortune easy to us. The only way to be happy is to submit to our lot; for no man can be properly said to be miserable that is not wanting to himself. It is certainly true, that many a poor cobbler has a merrier heart in his stall, than a prince in his palace.

FABLE VIII.

An Husbandman and Stork.

A POOR innocent Stork had the ill hap to be taken in a net that was laid for geese and cranes. The Stork's plea for herself was simplicity and piety, the love she bore to mankind, her duty to her parents, and the service she did in picking up venomous creatures. This may be all true, says the Husbandman, for what I know; but as you have been taken with ill company, you must expect to suffer with it.

MORALS.

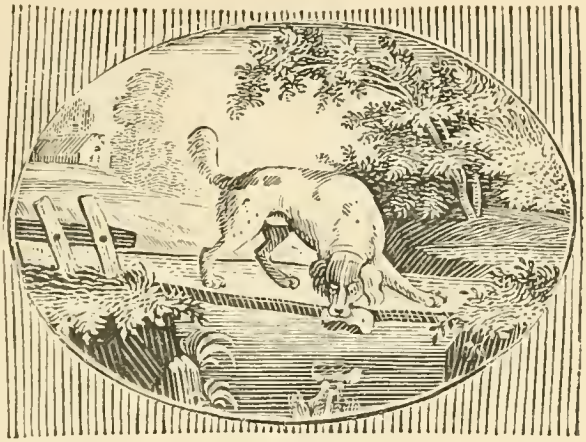
Our fortune and reputation require us to keep good company; for as we may be easily perverted by the force of bad examples, wise men will judge of us by the company we keep. What says the proverb? Birds of a feather will flock together.

The youth to temperance in vain pretends,
Who goes to taverns, and makes rakes his friends:
As maidens, who would live without a stain,
Should never choose to lodge in Drury-Lane.

REFLECTION.

The world will always form an idea of the character of every man from his associates. Nor is this rule founded on wrong principles; for, generally speaking, those who are constant companions are either drawn together from a similitude of manners, or from such a similitude to each other by daily commerce and continual conversation.

If bad company had nothing else to make us shun and avoid it, this, methinks, might be sufficient, *that it infects and taints a man's reputation to as great a degree as if he were thoroughly versed in the wickedness of the whole gang.* What is it to me if the thief who robs me of my money gives part of it to build a church? Is he ever the less a thief? Shall a woman's going to prayers twice a day, save her reputation, if she is known to be a malicious lying gossip? No; such mixtures of religion and sin make the offence but the more flagrant, as they convince us that it was not committed out of ignorance. Indeed, there is no living without being guilty of some faults, more or less; which the world ought to be good-natured enough to overlook, in consideration of the general frailty of mankind, when they are not too gross and too abundant. But, when we are so abandoned to stupidity, and a neglect of our reputation, as to keep bad company, however little we may be criminal in reality, we must expect the same censure and punishment as is due to the most notorious of our companions.



FABLE IX.

The Dog and the Shadow.

A DOG, crossing a little rivulet with a piece of flesh in his mouth, saw his own shadow represented in the clear mirror of the limpid stream; and believing it to be another Dog who was carrying another piece of flesh, he could not forbear catching at it; but was so far from getting anything by his greedy design, that he dropt the piece he had in his mouth, which immediately sunk to the bottom, and was irrecoverably lost.

MORALS.

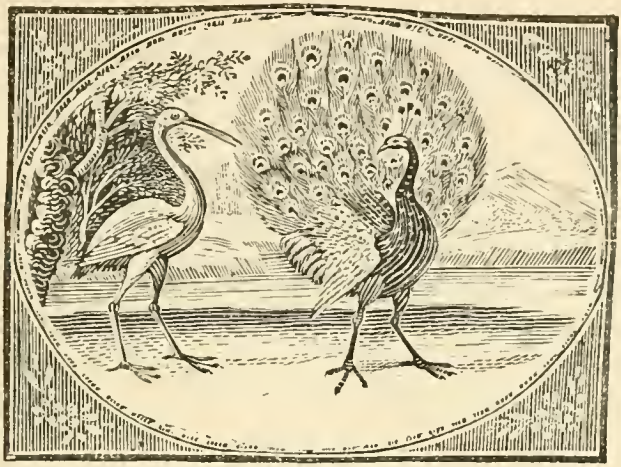
Excessive greediness mostly in the end misses what it aims at: disorderly appetites seldom obtain what they would have; passions mislead men, and often bring them into great straits and inconveniences, through heedlessness and negligence.

Base is the man who pines amidst his store,
And fat with plenty, griping, covets more:
But doubly vile, by av'rice when betray'd,
He quits the substance for an empty shade.

Reflection.

It is wisely decreed that vice should carry its own punishment along with it. Therefore he that catches at more than belongs to him, justly deserves to lose what he has; yet nothing is more common, and, at the same time, more pernicious, than this selfish principle. It prevails from the king to the peasant; and all orders and degrees of men are, more or less, infected with it. Great monarchs have been drawn in, by this greedy humour, to grasp at the dominions of their neighbours; not that they wanted anything more to feed their luxury, but to gratify their insatiable appetite for vainglory. If the Kings of *Persia* could have been contented with their own vast territories, they had not lost all *Asia*, for the sake of a little petty state of *Greece*. And *France*, with all its glory, has, ere now, been reduced to the last extremity by the same unjust incroachments.

He that thinks he sees another's estate in a pack of cards, or a box and dice, and ventures his own in the pursuit of it, should not repine if he finds himself a beggar in the end.



FABLE X.

A Peacock and a Crane.

AS a Peacock and a Crane were in company together, the Peacock spread his tail, and challenged the other to shew him such a fan of feathers. You brag of your plumes, says the Crane, that are fair indeed to the eye, but fit for nothing but to attract the eyes of children and fools. Do as I do, if you can; and then, with a suitable contempt, he springs up into the air, leaving the gaping Peacock staring after him till his eyes ached.

MORALS.

There cannot be a greater sign of a weak mind than a person's valuing himself on a gaudy outside; whether it be on the beauties of person, or the still vainer pride of fine clothes.

Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,
The rest is all but leather or prunella.

Reflection.

It is very absurd to slight or insult another upon his wanting a property which we possess; for he may, for anything we know, have as just reason to triumph over us, by being master of some good quality of which we are incapable. But, in regard to the fable before us, that which the Peacock values himself upon, the glitter and finery of dress, is one of the most trifling considerations in nature; and what a man of sense would be ashamed to reckon even as the least part of merit. Indeed, children, and those people who think much about the same pitch with them, are apt to be taken with varnish and tinsel; but they who examine by the scale of common sense, must find something of weight and substance before they can be persuaded to set a value. The mind which is stored with virtuous and rational sentiments, and the behaviour which speaks complacence and humility, stamp an estimate upon the possessor which all judicious spectators are ready to admire and acknowledge. But if there be any merit in an embroidered coat, a brocade waistcoat, a shoe, a stocking, or a sword-knot, the person who wears them has the least claim to it; let it be ascribed where it justly belongs —to the several artisans who wrought and disposed the materials of which they consist. This moral is not intended to derogate anything from the magnificence of fine clothes and rich equipages, which, as times and circumstances require, may be used with decency and propriety enough. But one cannot help being concerned lest any worth should be affixed to them more than their own intrinsic value.

FABLE XI.

A Boy and False Alarms.

A SHEPHERD'S Boy kept his sheep upon a common, and in sport and wantonness had gotten a roguish trick of crying, A wolf! a wolf! when there was no such matter, and fooling the country people with false alarms. He had been at this sport so many times in jest, that they would not believe him at last when he was in earnest; and so the wolves broke in upon the flock, and worried the sheep without resistance.

MORALS.

This fable shews us the dangerous consequences of an improper and unseasonable fooling. The old moral observes, that a common liar shall not be believed, even when he speaks true.

Rank lies repeated oft, and oft detected,
Makes truth itself for a rank lie suspected.

REFLECTION.

It is not every man's talent to know when and how to cast out a pleasant word, with such a regard to modesty and respect as not to transgress the true and fair allowances of wit, good-nature, and good breeding. The skill and faculty of governing this freedom within the terms of sobriety and discretion, goes a great way in the character of an agreeable companion: for that which we call raillery, in this sense, is the very sauce of civil entertainment; and without some such tincture of urbanity, even in matters the most serious, the good-humour falters for want of refreshment and relief; but there is a *medium* yet betwixt *all-fool* and *all-philosopher;* I mean a proper and discreet mixture, that in some sort partakes of both, and renders wisdom itself so much the more grateful and effectual. The gravity, in short, of the one is enlivened with the spirit and quickness of the other; and the gaiety of a diverting word serves as a vehicle to convey the force of the intent and meaning of it.

The Shepherd's Boy, in short, to come closer to the fable, went too far upon a topic he did not understand. And he that is detected for being a notorious liar, besides the ignominy and reproach of the thing, incurs this mischief, that he will scarce be able to get any one to believe him again as long as he lives. However true our complaint may be, or how much soever it may be for our interest to have it believed, yet, if we have been frequently caught tripping before, we shall hardly be able to gain credit to what we relate afterwards. Though mankind are generally stupid

enough to be often imposed upon, yet few are so senseless as to believe a notorious liar, or to trust a cheat upon record. These little shams, when found out, are sufficiently prejudicial to the interest of every private person who practises them. But, when we are alarmed with imaginary dangers in respect of the public, till the cry grows quite stale and threadbare, how can it be expected we should know when to guard ourselves against real ones.

FABLE XII.

A Father and his Sons.

A VERY honest man happened to have a contentious brood of children. He called for a rod, and bade them try one after another, with all their force, if they could break it. They tried, and could not. Well, says he, unbind it now, and take every twig of it apart, and see what you can do that way. They did so, and with great ease, by one and

one, they snapped it all to pieces. This, says he, is the true emblem of your condition: keep together, and you are safe; divide, and you are undone.

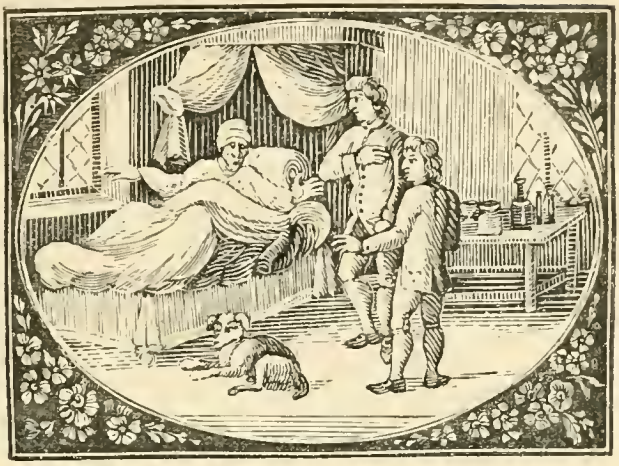
MORALS.

The breach of unity puts the world into a state of war, and turns every man's hand against his brother; but so long as that band holds, it is the strength of all the several parts of it gathered into one, and is not easily subdued.

Distress and ruin on divisions wait,
But union is the bond of ev'ry state;
Disloyalty's a plague, dissension's worse,
And parties, where they rage, a kingdom's curse.

REFLECTION.

This fable imitates the force of union, and the danger of division. Intestine commotions have destroyed many a powerful state; and it is as ruinous in private affairs as it is in public. A divided family can no more stand than a divided commonwealth; for every individual suffers in the neglect of a common safety. It is a strange thing that men should not do that under the government of rational spirit, and a natural prudence, which wolves and bears do by the impulse of an animal instinct. For they, we see, will make head, one and all, against a common enemy; whereas the generality of mankind lie pecking at one another, till one by one they are all torn to pieces, never considering (as this fable teaches) the necessity and benefits of union.



FABLE XIII.

The Sick Father and his Children.

A COUNTRYMAN who had lived handsomely in the world upon his honest labour and industry, was desirous his Sons should do so after him; and being now upon his death-bed, My dear children, says he, I reckon myself bound to tell you before I depart, that there is a considerable treasure hid in my vineyard; wherefore pray be sure to dig, and search narrowly for it, when I am gone. The Father dies, and the Sons fall immediately to work upon the vineyard. They turned it up over and over, and not one penny of money to be found there; but the profit of the next vintage expounded the riddle.

MORALS.

Good counsel is the best legacy a Father can leave to a Child; and it is still the better, when it is so wrapt up, as to beget a curiosity as well as an inclination to follow it.

Assiduous pains the swelling coffers fill,
And all may make their fortune, if they will.

Reflection.

There is no wealth like that which comes by the blessing of God upon honest labour and warrantable industry. Here is an incitement to an industrious course of life, by a consideration of the profit, the innocence, and the virtue of such an application. There is one great comfort in hand, besides the hope and assurance of more to come. It was a touch of art in the Father to cover his meaning in such a manner as to create a curiosity and an earnest desire in his Sons to find it out. And it was a treble advantage to them besides; for there was health in the exercise, profit in the discovery, and the comfort of a good conscience in discharging the duty of a filial obedience.

FABLE XIV.

The Stag looking into the Water.

A STAG that had been drinking at a clear spring, saw himself in the water; and, pleased with the prospect, stood afterwards for some time contemplating and surveying his shape and features, from head to foot. Ah! says he, what a glorious pair of branching horns are there! how gracefully do those antlers hang over my forehead, and give an agreeable turn to my whole face! If some other parts of my body were but proportionable to them, I would turn my back to nobody; but I have a set of such legs as really makes me ashamed to see them. People may talk what they please of their conveniences, and what great need we stand in of them upon several occasions; but for my part, I find them so very slender and unsightly, that I had as lief have

none at all. While he was giving himself these airs, he was alarmed with the noise of some Huntsmen and a pack of hounds that had been just laid on upon the scent, and were making towards him. Away he flies in some consternation, and, bounding nimbly over the plain, threw dogs and men at a vast distance behind him. After which, taking a very thick copse, he had the ill-fortune to be entangled by his horns in a thicket; where he was held fast, till the hounds came in and pulled him down. Finding now how it was like to go with him, in the pangs of death, he is said to have uttered these words: Unhappy creature that I am! I am too late convinced, that what I prided myself in has been the cause of my undoing; and what I so much disliked, was the only thing that could have saved me.

MORALS.

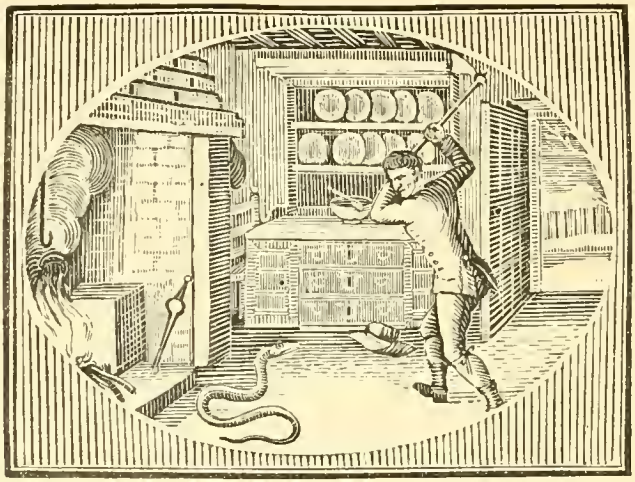
We should examine things deliberately, and candidly consider their real usefulness before we place our esteem on them; otherwise, like the foolish Stag, we may happen to admire those accomplishments which are of no real use, and often prove prejudicial to us, while we despise those things on which our safety may depend.

Virtue despised, the beauty views her face,
And pleased beholds an angel in her glass;
But lost at length, to shame and want resigned,
Mourns she ne'er sought the beauty of the mind.

REFLECTION.

Perhaps we cannot apply this better, than by supposing the fable to be a parable; which may be thus

explained. The Deer, viewing itself in the water, is a beautiful young lady at her looking-glass. She can't help being sensible of the charms which lie blooming in every feature of her face. She moistens her lips, languishes with her eyes, adjusts every lock of her hair with the nicest exactness, gives an agreeable attitude to her whole body, and then, with a soft sigh, says to herself, Ah! how happy might I be, in a daily crowd of admirers, if it were not for the censoriousness of the age! When I view that face, where Nature, to give her her due, has been liberal enough of charms, how easy should I be, if it were not for that slender particular, my honour. The odious idea of that comes across all my happy moments, and brings a mortification with it that damps my most flattering tender hopes. Oh that there were no such thing in the world! In the midst of these soliloquies, she is interrupted by the voice of her lover, who enters her chamber singing a rigadoon air; and, introducing his discourse in a familiar easy manner, takes occasion to launch out in praise of her beauty, sees she is pleased with it, snatches her hand, kisses it in a transport; and in short, pursues his point so close, that she is not able to disengage herself from him. But, when the consequence of all this approaches, in an agony of grief and shame, she fetches a deep sigh, and says, "Ah! how mistaken have I been! the virtue I slighted might have saved me; but the beauty I prized so much has been my undoing."



FABLE XV.

The Countryman and the Snake.

A VILLAGER, in a frosty, snowy winter, found a Snake under a hedge, almost dead with cold. He could not help having compassion for the poor creature, so brought it home, and laid it upon the hearth near the fire; but it had not lain there long before (being revived with the heat) it began to erect itself, and fly at his wife and children, filling the whole cottage with dreadful hissings. The countryman hearing an outcry, and perceiving what the matter was, catched up a mattock, and soon dispatched him, upbraiding him at the same time in these words: "Is this, vile wretch, the reward you make to him that saved your life? Die, as you deserve; but a single death is too good for you."

MORALS.

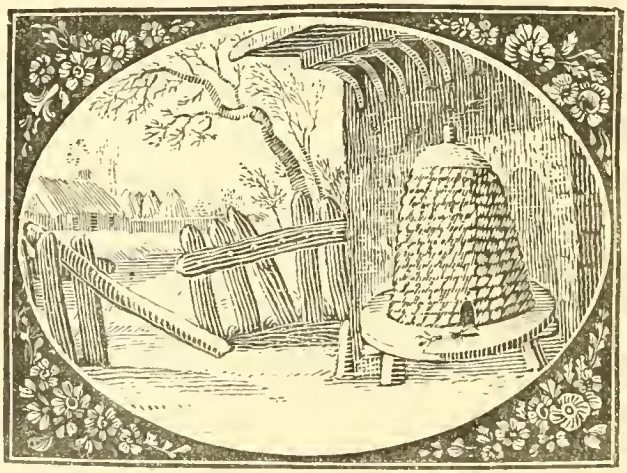
It is no strange thing to see a reprobate fool throw his poisonous language about against those who are so inadvertent as to concern themselves with him.

Evil for good, relentless to bestow,
Is all the gratitude th' unworthy know;
Mercy to such should be with caution shown;
Saving a villain's life, you risk your own.

REFLECTION.

'Tis the nature of ingrates to return evil for good; and the moralists in all ages have incessantly declaimed against the enormity of this crime, concluding *that they who are capable of hurting their benefactors, are not fit to live in a community; being such, as the natural ties of parent, friend, or country, are too weak to restrain within the bounds of society.* Indeed, the sin of ingratitude is so detestable, that, as none but the most inhuman temper can be guilty of it, so, in writing to men, there is no occasion to use many words, either in exposing the vice itself, or dissuading people from the commission of it. Therefore it is not likely that a person of *Æsop's* sagacity would have compiled this fable, without having something else in view, besides this trite and obvious subject. He certainly intended to put us in mind, *That, as none but a poor silly clown would go to take up a Snake and cherish it, so we shall be very negligent and ill-advised, if, in doing good offices, we do not take care to bestow our benevolence upon proper objects.* It was not at all unnatural in the Snake to hiss, and brandish his tongue, and fly at the first that came near him;

as soon at the person that saved his life as any other; indeed more likely, because nobody else had so much to do with him. Nor is it strange at any time to see a reprobate fool throwing his poisonous language about, and committing his extravagances against those, more especially, who are so inadvertent as to concern themselves with him. The snake and the reprobate will not appear extraordinary in their malevolence. But the sensible part of mankind cannot help thinking those guilty of great indiscretion who receive either of them into their protection.



FABLE XVI.

A Gnat and a Bee.

A GNAT, half starved with cold and hunger, went one frosty morning to a Bee-hive, to beg a charity; and offered to teach music in the Bee's family, for her diet and lodging. The Bee very civilly desired to be excused: For, says she, I bring up all

my children to my own trade, that they may be able to get their living by their industry; and I am sure I am right; for see what that music, which you would teach my children, has brought you yourself to.

MORALS.

Industry ought to be diligently inculcated in the minds of children of all ranks and degrees; for who stands so sure as to say he is exempt from the vicissitudes of this uncertain life?

The wretch who works not for his daily bread,
Sighs and complains, but ought not to be fed.
Think, when you see stout beggars on their stand,
The lazy are the locusts of the land.

REFLECTION.

The many unhappy persons whom we daily see singing up and down in order to divert other people, though with very heavy hearts of their own, should warn all those who have the education of children, how necessary it is to bring them up to industry and business, be their present prospects ever so hopeful; that so, upon any unexpected disaster, they might be able to turn their hands to a course which might procure them an honest livelihood.

The Gnat in the fable, we may further observe, is very like many inconsiderate persons in life. They gaily buz about in the *summer of prosperity*, and think of nothing but their present enjoyments: but when the *winter of adversity* comes, they poorly creep about, and supplicate the industrious inhabitants of every *Bee-hive*, charitably to relieve those wants which they have brought upon themselves; and often

deservedly meet the repulse, and the sting, which the Bee gives to the Gnat in the fable. We have seen many a doted-on child, who has been brought up to singing, dancing, and all the gay delights of this world, and yet has been forced to shut up the last scene of a miserable life in want and beggary; which had been prevented, if they had been early taught the value of industry and independency, and the means, by the former, of attaining the latter.

FABLE XVII.

Mercury and the Woodman.

A MAN was felling a tree on the bank of a river; and by chance let his hatchet slip out of his hand, which dropt into the water, and immediately sunk to the bottom. Being therefore in great distress for the loss of his tool, he sat down and bemoaned himself most lamentably. Upon this, *Mercury* ap-

peared to him, and, being informed of the cause of his complaint, dived to the bottom of the river, and coming up again, showed the man a golden hatchet, demanding if that were his. He denied that it was. Upon which *Mercury* dived a second time, and brought up a silver one. The man refused it, alleging likewise that this was not his. He dived a third time, and fetched up the individual hatchet the man had lost; upon sight of which the poor wretch was overjoyed, and took it with all humility and thankfulness. *Mercury* was so pleased with the fellow's honesty, that he gave him the other two into the bargain, as a reward for his just dealing. The man goes to his companions, and giving them an account of what had happened, one of them went presently to the river's side, and let his hatchet fall designedly into the stream. Then sitting down upon the bank, he fell a weeping and lamenting, as if he had been really and sorely afflicted. *Mercury* appeared as before, and diving, brought him up a golden hatchet, asking if that was the hatchet he lost. Transported at the precious metal, he answered, Yes; and went to snatch it greedily. But the god detesting his abominable impudence, not only refused to give him that, but would not so much as let him have his own hatchet again.

MORALS.

Honesty is the best policy; religion absolutely requires it of its votaries: and the honest man, provided his other talents are not deficient, always carries the preference in our esteem before any other, in whatever business he employs himself.

Truth, sacred truth, shall flourish and prevail,
While all the arts of fraud and falsehood fail;
The flimsy cheat wise judges soon descry;
Sure those will rob, *who scruple not to* lie.

REFLECTION.

Notwithstanding the proneness of mankind to do evil, and the account which some find in playing the knave, yet there cannot be invented a more true and reasonable maxim, than that by which we are assured that *honesty is the best policy.* If we consider it in respect to the other world, there never was a religion but strictly required it of its votaries. If we examine it upon account of this, we shall find that the honest man, provided his other talents are not deficient, always carries the preference in our esteem, before any other, in whatever business he thinks fit to employ himself.

FABLE XVIII.

The Fir and a Bramble.

MY head, says the boasting Fir-tree to the humble Bramble, is advanced among the stars; I furnish beams for palaces, and masts for

shipping; the very sweat of my body is a sovereign remedy for the sick and wounded: whereas thou, O rascally Bramble, runnest creeping in the dirt, and art good for nothing in the world but mischief. I pretend not to vie with thee, said the Bramble, in the points thou gloriest in. But, not to insist upon it, that He who made thee a lofty Fir, could have made thee an humble Bramble, I pray thee tell me, when the Carpenter comes next with the axe into the wood, to fell timber, whether thou hadst not rather be a Bramble than a Fir-tree?

MORALS.

Poverty secures a man from many dangers; whereas the rich and the mighty are the mark of malice and cross fortune; and still the higher they are, the nearer the thunder.

Minions of fortune, pillars of the state,
Round your exalted heads what tempests low'r!
While peace secure, and soft contentment wait
On the calm mansions of the humble poor.

REFLECTION.

The answer of the humble Bramble to the proud Fir-tree is so pathetic, that it may of itself serve for a very good moral to this fable. Nothing of God's works is so mean as to be despised, and nothing so lofty but it may be humbled; nay, and the greater the height the greater the danger. For a proud great man to despise an humble little one, when Providence can so easily exalt the one, and abase the other, and has not for the merit of the one, or the demerit of the

other, conferred the respective conditions, is a most inexcusable arrogance: and history has given numberless instances, where the overgrown Fir, though a Prime Minister, or great Prince, in the very height of its pride, has been forced to submit to the executioner's axe, while the humble Bramble, or contented poor man, has continued safe and unhurt in his lowly obscurity. We may further observe on this fable, that there is no state of life but has its mixture of good and evil. The Fir may boast of the uses to which it is put, and of its strength and stature; but then it has not to boast of the creeping Bramble's safety; for the value of the one tempts the Carpenter's axe, while the poverty of the other makes it little worth any one's while to molest it. Upon the whole matter, we may add, *That as pride or arrogance is a vice that seldom escapes without a punishment; so humility is a virtue that hardly ever goes without a blessing.*

Fable XIX.

The Fox and the Countryman.

A FOX being hard hunted, and having run a long chase, was quite tired. At last he spied a country fellow in a wood, to whom he applied for refuge, entreating that he would give him leave to hide himself in his cottage, till the hounds were gone by. The man consented, and the Fox went and covered himself up close in a corner of the hovel. Presently the hunters came up, and inquired of the man, if he had seen the Fox. No, says he, I have not seen him indeed: but all the while he pointed with his finger to the place where the Fox was hid. However, the hunters did not understand him, but called off their hounds, and went another way. Soon after, the Fox, creeping out of his hole, was going to sneak off; when the man, calling after him, asked him, if that was his manners, to go away without thanking his benefactor, to whose fidelity he owed

his life. *Reynard*, who had peeped all the while, and seen what passed, answered, I know what obligations I have to you well enough; and I assure you, if your actions had but been agreeable to your words, I should have endeavoured, however incapable of it, to have returned you suitable thanks.

MORALS.

To appear in another's interest, while underhand we are giving intelligence to their enemies, is treacherous, knavish, and base.

Thus by the knave, in worldly guile adept,
Vows are perform'd and promises are kept:
True to the form, and fearful of offence,
Good soul! he swerves from nothing but the sense.

REFLECTION.

Sincerity is a most beautiful virtue: but there are some, whose natures are so poor-spirited and cowardly, that they are not capable of exerting it. Indeed, unless a man be steady and constant in all his actions, he will hardly deserve the name of sincere. An open enemy, though more violent and terrible, is not, however, so odious and detestable as a false friend. To pretend to keep another's counsel, and appear in their interest, while underhand we are giving intelligence to their enemies, is treacherous, knavish, and base. There are some people in the world very dexterous at this kind of defamation; and can, while they seem most vehement in the commendation or defence of a friend, throw out a hint which shall stab their reputation deeper

than the most malicious weapon, brandished at them in a public manner, could have been capable of doing.

Fable XX.

A One-Eyed Stag.

A ONE-EYED Stag that was afraid of the Huntsmen at land, kept a watch that way, and fed with his blind side towards an arm of the sea, where he thought there was no danger. In this hope of security, he was shot, by a ball from a boat, and so ended his days with this lamentation : Here I am destroyed, says he, where I reckoned myself to be safe on the one hand ; and no evil has befallen me, where I most dreaded it, on the other. But it is my comfort that I intended the best.

MORALS.

We are liable to many accidents that no care or foresight can prevent: but we are to provide, however, the best we can against them, and leave the rest to Providence.

The man whom we fear and suspect for a cheat,
Can hardly delude us with art and deceit;
But he, in whose faith we securely confide,
May come round with impunity on our blind side.

REFLECTION.

We are many times preserved or destroyed by those accidents or counsels that in all probability should have had quite contrary effects. But yet it is our part to act according to reason, and commit ourselves to Heaven for the rest. The wisest of men have their *follies* or *blind sides*, and have their enemies too, who watch to take advantage of their weakness. It behoves us therefore to look to ourselves on the *blind side*, as the part that lies most exposed to an attack. And yet, when we have done our best to prevent mischief, the very precaution itself serves many times to contribute to our ruin. In short, the ways and workings of Providence are unsearchable, and it is not in the power of human prudence to obviate all the accidents of life.

Fable XXI.

A Shepherd and a Young Wolf.

A SHEPHERD took a Wolf's sucking Whelp, and trained it up with his Dogs. The Whelp fed with them, grew up with them, and whensoever they went out upon the chase of a Wolf, the Whelp would be sure to make one. It fell out sometimes that the Wolf escaped; but this domestic Wolf would be still hunting on, after the dogs had given over the chase, till he came up to his true brethren, where he took part of the prey with them, and then went back again to his master. And when he could come in for no snacks with the Wolves, he would now and then make free, by the by, with a straggling Sheep out of the flock. He carried on this trade for a while; but at last he was caught in the fact, and hanged by his injured master.

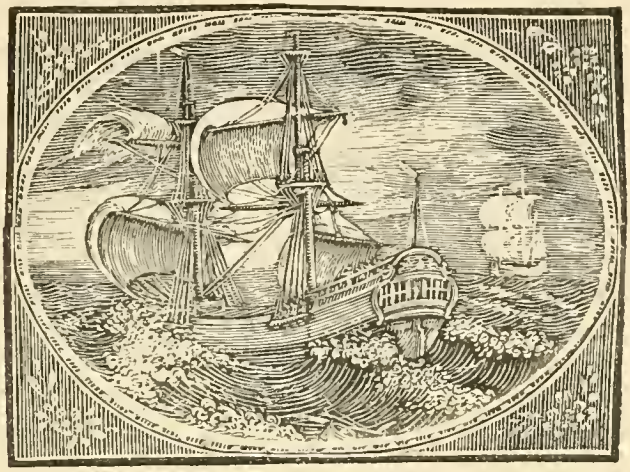
MORALS.

Men naturally false and treacherous are no more to be reclaimed than Wolves. Benefits but augment their power to do mischief, and they never fail to make use of it to the prejudice of their benefactors.

The knave profest may seem a gen'rous foe,
Deserves a rope, yet claims our pity too;
But dragg'd to light, and stript of his disguise,
The sneaking hypocrite unpitied dies.

REFLECTION.

Ill dispositions may be dissembled for a while, but nature is very hardly to be altered, either by counsel or education. It may do well enough for curiosity and experiment, to try how far ill-natured men, and other creatures, may be wrought upon by fair usage and good breeding; but the inclination and cruelty of the dam will be hardly ever out of the Whelp. *Thrust back nature with a pitch-fork,* says the poet, *and it will return.* This Fable is a true portrait of an ungrateful and treacherous mind, which, according to the proverb, *holds with the Hare, and runs with the Hound;* which pretends greater zeal than others, like the Wolf's Whelp in the chase, in the detection and pursuit of a common enemy; but at the same time divides spoils with him, and, rather than want an opportunity of doing mischief, will prey privately upon the property he pretends to defend. Many such instances we might give in public life; and there have been too many such also in private life. The punishment so richly merited in the Fable is heartily to be wished whenever they happen, and it is a pity it should be wanted.



Fable XXII.

Seamen Praying to Saints.

IN a terrible tempest at Sea, one Seaman took notice that the rest of his fellows were praying severally to so many Saints. Have a care, my masters, says he, what you do; for what if we should all be drowned now before the messenger can deliver his errand? would it not be better, without going so far about, to pray to Him that can save us without help.

Morals.

A wise man will take the nearest and surest way to obtain his end, and to commit no business of importance to a proxy, where he may do it himself.

Inactive wishes are but waste of time,
And, without efforts, pray'rs themselves a crime:
Vain are their hopes, who miracles expect,
And ask from heaven what themselves neglect.

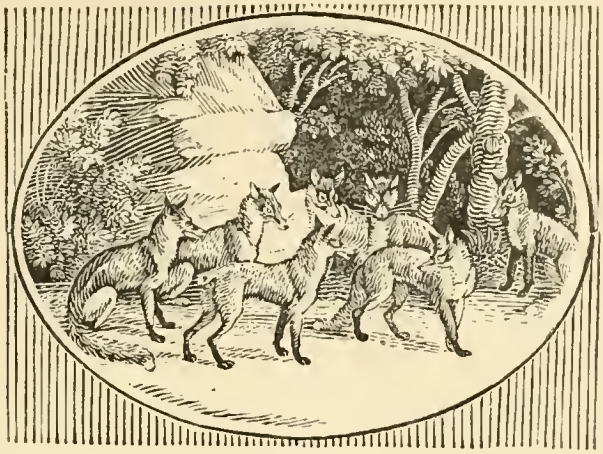
Reflection.

Mankind, indolent and discontented, are very apt

to murmur at the dispensations of Providence, and to call for divine assistance to extricate them from their difficulties, when it is in their own power to accomplish what they desire. They, who will not stir a finger to promote their own interest, have little title to expect any foreign assistance: but when they have exerted their utmost skill and assiduity, their prayers, if there is need for them, will be enforced by every argument drawn from their own merit, and the compassion of those to whom they make their application. Industry includes in itself this double blessing: It commonly enables us to gain the point we aim at; and in that case heightens the relish of our enjoyments, when we consider that we have attained them by our own art and perseverance: but if we should happen to fail in our endeavours, it excites the pity of those who are able to serve us; and gives a grace to our petitions for assistance and relief.

What needs any man make his court to the servants, says Sir *Roger L'Estrange*, when his access is open to the Master? and especially when that Master is as ready to give as the petitioner to ask.

With regard to secular matters, we are told a pleasant story of one of our princes, King *Charles* II. He had often observed a country gentleman attending to speak with one of his first ministers; and once passing through the apartment where the gentleman happened to be alone, he asked him his business. He told him, that he was attending upon his minister, as he had often done, for such a post in his Majesty's gift. The King asked him, what he was to give for it to the minister? He said £1000. The King humorously told him he should have it, and bid him give him £500, and keep t'other £500 himself; and if he or his friends wanted any more such bargains, he might apply to *himself* directly, and be served at half price.



FABLE XXIII.

A Fox that had lost his Tail.

A FOX taken in a trap was glad to compound for his neck, by leaving his tail behind him. It was so uncouth a sight for a Fox to appear without a tail, that the very thought of it made him weary of his life: but, however, for the better countenance of the scandal, he got the *Master and Wardens of the Foxes' company* to call a *Court of Assistants*, where he himself appeared, and made a learned discourse upon the trouble, the uselessness, and the indecency of Foxes wearing tails. He had no sooner said out his say, but up rises a cunning Snap, then at the board, who desired to be informed, whether the worthy member that moved against the wearing of tails, gave his advice for the advantage of those that *had tails*, or to palliate the deformity and disgrace of those that *had none*.

MORALS.

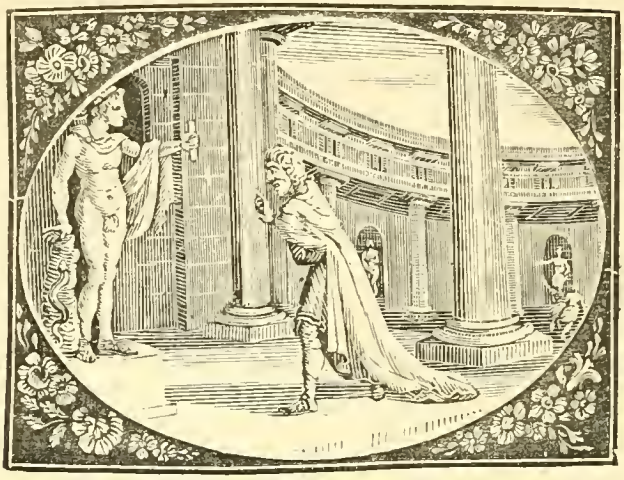
It is the way of the world to give other people counsel for by-ends. But yet it is a hard matter to over-rule a multitude to their own pain and loss.

Gladly Sir Clumsy *would the world persuade,*
Not he, but all mankind are vilely made;
And might the purblind and the deaf advise,
'Twere better for to want both ear and eyes.

REFLECTION.

We may improve a doctrine from this, that every man has his *weak side*, either by mischance or by nature; and that he makes it his business to cover it, too, the best he can. In case of the worst, it is some sort of ease to have company in misfortune. It puts a man out of countenance to be in fashion by himself, and therefore the Fox acted cunningly to try if he could bring his fellow Foxes to put themselves into his mode. When we have carried a point as far as it will go, and can make no more of it, it is a stroke of art and philosophy to look as if we did not so much as wish for a thing that is not to be had. Every man's present condition has somewhat to be said for it: if it be uneasy, the skill will be, either how to *mend* it, or how to *bear* it; but then there must be no clashing with the methods, the decrees, and the laws of nature. A man that has forfeited his honour and his conscience, seems to be much in the condition of the Fox here that had lost his tail; and oftentimes takes as much pains, too, to persuade all his companions to follow his fashion, and be as corrupt as himself, that he may bring the rest of the world down to his own standard.

In respect to temporal affairs, they, who pretend to advise what measures are most conducive to the public welfare, are often guided entirely by their own private interest: but whenever they counsel any extraordinary innovations, or endeavour to change any established proceedings long used and approved, we may be almost certain that they have some other design, rather than the promotion of the general good. When new regulations are proposed, we should turn our eyes on those who propose them, and consider with attention, whether they have not some personal motives for their conduct, and we should be particularly cautious not to suffer ourselves to be imposed on by *fine speeches* and *pretended patriotism:* for *he* who is *very solicitous* to bring about a scheme, not attended with any visible advantage to the community, must only mean his own benefit; or, like the Fox, when he has been caught himself in one trap, endeavour to catch us in another.



FABLE XXIV.

A Scoffer Punished.

A PRESUMPTUOUS Scoffer at things sacred took a journey to *Delphi*, on purpose to try if he could put a trick upon *Apollo*. He carried a sparrow in his hand under his coat, and told the god, *I have something in my hand*, says he: *Is it dead or living?* If the oracle should say it was dead, he could show it alive; if living, it was but squeezing it, and then it was dead. He that saw the iniquity of his heart, gave him this answer: It shall e'en be which of the two thou pleasest: for it is in thy choice to have it either the one or the other, as to the bird, but it is not in thy power as to thyself; and immediately struck the bold scoffer dead, for a warning to others.

MORALS.

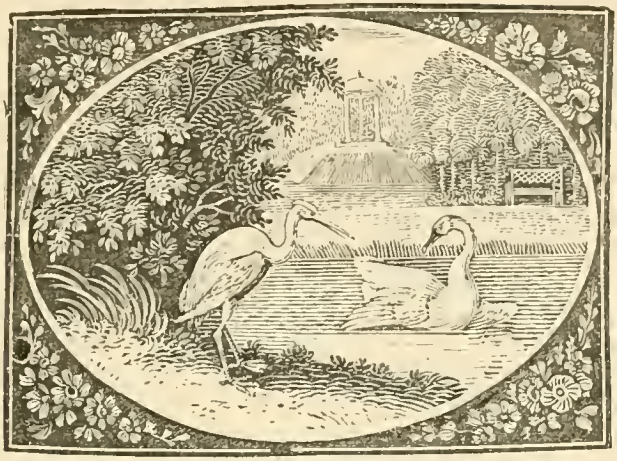
Presumption naturally leads people to infidelity, and that by insensible degrees to atheism: for when men have once cast off a reverence for religion, they are come within one step of laughing at it.

That there's a God all nature loud proclaims,
Tho' the vile Atheist the great truth disclaims;
Or warp'd by prejudice, or sunk in sin,
His fright'ned conscience feels the lash within.

REFLECTION.

There is no playing fast and loose with God Almighty, who sees the very thoughts of our hearts. This way of fooling in holy things, is the very boldest sort of impiety that can be practised. He that pretends to doubt of an All-knowing power, has as much right to doubt of an Almighty power too; and the bringing of one attribute in question, opens the way to a diffidence of all the rest. It would prevent a great deal of wickedness in the world, if men would but live and act in religious matters, so as to own and to recognise the force and awe of a Deity in their *practices*, as well as in their *words:* but when they come to querying and riddling upon it, with an *If it be so and so,* the scandal of the supposition is not to be borne; for such a way of seeming to affirm a thing, is but one remove from a flat denial of it. Such was the Scoffer's question here to the oracle, which implies

both the doubt of a divine Omniscience, and a curiosity to discover the truth of the matter, with a banter at the end of it; and so makes a consummated wickedness.



Fable XXV.

A Swan and a Stork.

A STORK that was present at the song of a dying Swan, told her, it was contrary to nature to sing so much out of season; and asked her the reason of it. Why, says the Swan, I am now entering into a state where I shall be no longer in danger of either snares, guns, or hunger; and who would not joy at such a deliverance?

Morals.

Death is a certain relief from all the difficulties, pains, and hazards of life.

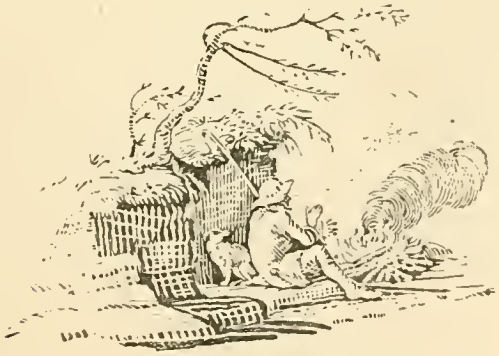
This life's a scene of bustle, care, and noise,
Of certain trouble, and uncertain joys,
Death ends the contest, we can only have
A peaceful refuge in the silent grave.

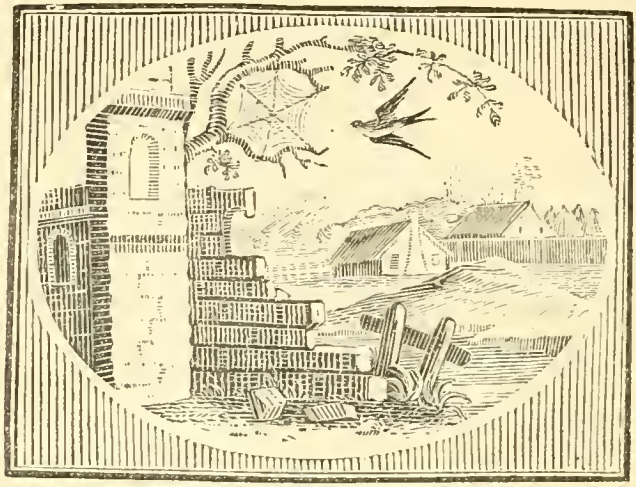
Reflection.

It is a great folly to fear that which it is impossible to avoid; and it is yet a greater folly to fear the remedy of all evils: for death cures all diseases, and frees us from all cares. It is as great a folly again not to prepare ourselves, and provide for an inevitable fate. We are as sure to go out of the world, as we are that ever we came into it; and nothing but the conscience of a good life can support us in that last extremity. The fiction of a Swan's singing at her death does, in the moral, but advise and recommend it to us to make ready for the cheerful entertainment of our last hour, and to consider with ourselves, that if death be so welcome a relief even to animals, barely as a deliverance from the cares, miseries, and dangers of a troublesome life, how much a greater blessing ought all good men to account it then, that are not only freed by it from the snares, difficulties, and distractions of a wicked world, but put into possession (over and above) of an everlasting peace, and the fruition of joys that shall never have an end!

To attain this desirable state of mind, it is necessary that we reflect fully and frequently on the uncertainty of all worldly affairs, how flitting and transitory, and how barren of real happiness, they are; and to endeavour at a proper discharge of our duty to *society*, by acting well the part assigned us in it, and managing the talents committed to our care, to beneficial ends and purposes; to our *Creator*, by a constant and humble acquiescence in the dispensations of His providence, and sincere and grateful acknowledgments for His numberless mercies;

to *ourselves*, by restraining inordinate and unlawful desires, and bridling our dissolute and licentious affections, duly considering, that as we bear the stamp and image of the Deity, every debasement and pollution offered to our persons is an affront and indignity to Him, and contrary to His express commands: By a constant attention to these things, we may be enabled to meet death without fear. The consciousness of a well-spent life strips the tyrant of all his terrors; then, like the Swan in the Fable, we shall consider him as a welcome visitant that will ease us of this load of mortality, and usher us into a state of inexpressible felicity.





FABLE XXVI.

A Swallow and a Spider.

A SPIDER that observed a Swallow catching of flies, fell immediately to work upon a net to catch Swallows; for she looked upon it as an encroachment upon her right: but the birds, without any difficulty, brake through the work, and flew away with the very net itself. Well, says the Spider, bird-catching is none of my talent, I perceive; and so she returned to her old trade of catching flies again.

MORALS.

A wise man will not undertake anything without means answerable to the end.

They who by imitations covet fame,
Oft incur dangers, and solicit shame;

For though the bright original we prize,
His abject imitator all despise.

REFLECTION.

Every man should examine the strength of his own mind with attention and impartiality, and not fondly flatter himself by measuring his own talents by the false standard of the abilities of another. We can no more adopt the genius of another man than assume his shape and person; and an imitation of his manner would no more become us than his clothes. Man is indeed an imitative animal; but whatever we take from general observation, without servilely copying the practice of any individual, becomes so mixed and incorporated with our notions that it may fairly be called our own. Almost every man has something original in himself, which, if duly cultivated, might perhaps procure him esteem and applause; but if he neglects his natural talents, or perverts them by an absurd imitation of others, he becomes an object of ridicule; especially, if he attempts to perform things beyond the compass of his strength or understanding.

FABLE XXVII.

A Dog, a Cock, and a Fox.

A DOG and a Cock took a journey together. The Dog kennelled in the body of a hollow tree, and the Cock roosted at night upon the boughs. The Cock crowed about midnight (at his usual hour), which brought a Fox that was abroad upon the hunt immediately to the tree; and there he stood licking of his lips at the Cock, and, wheedling him to get him down, he protested he never heard so angelical a voice since he was born; and what would not he do now, to hug the creature that had given him so admirable a serenade? Pray, says the Cock, speak to the porter below to open the door, and I 'll come down to you. The Fox, little dreaming of the Dog so near, did as he was directed, and the Dog presently seized and worried him.

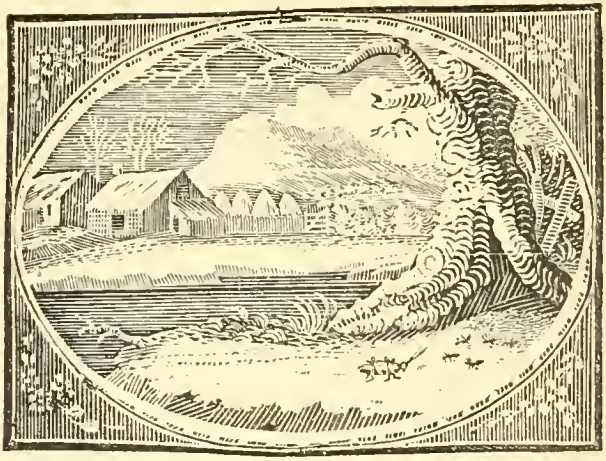
MORALS.

When a man has to do with an adversary who is too crafty or too strong for him, it is right to turn him off to his match.

Happy the ready wit of men of parts,
Who on himself can turn the villain's arts!

REFLECTION.

Experience makes many a wise man of a fool, and security makes many a fool of a wise man. We have an instance of the former in the Cock's over-reaching the Fox; and of the other in the Fox's supine confidence, that made him so intent upon his prey, as to neglect his safety; and to fall himself into the pit that he had digged for another. It is much the same case in the world, when Providence is pleased to confound the presumptuous, the false, the mighty, and the bloodthirsty by judgments of lice and frogs—that is to say, by the most despicable of instruments; and that frequently at a crisis of time, when they think themselves sure of the success of their mischievous projects.



FABLE XXVIII.

The Ants and a Grasshopper.

AS the Ants were airing their provisions one winter, a hungry Grasshopper begged a charity of them. They told him, that he should have wrought in summer, if he would not have wanted in winter. Well, says the Grasshopper, but I was not idle neither; for I sung out the whole season. Nay then, said they, you 'll e'en do well to make a merry year of it, and dance in winter to the tune that you sung in summer.

MORALS.

Action and industry is the business of a wise and a good man, and nothing is so much to be despised as slothfulness. Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, *says the Royal Preacher*, consider her ways, and be wise; *which in a few words sums up the moral of this fable.*

O now, while health and vigour still remain,
Toil, toil, my lads, to purchase honest gain!
Shun idleness! shun pleasure's tempting snare!
A youth of revels breeds an age of care.

REFLECTION.

It is hard to say of laziness or luxury, whether it be the more scandalous, or the more dangerous evil. The very soul of the slothful does but lie drowsing in his body, and the whole man is totally given up to his senses; whereas the profit and the comfort of industry are substantial, firm, and lasting; the blessings of security and plenty go along with it, and it is never out of season. What is the Grasshopper's entertainment now, but a summer's song? A vain and empty pleasure? Let it be understood, however, that we are not to pass avarice upon the world under title of good-husbandry and thrift, and thereby utterly to extinguish charity. We are indeed, in the first place, to consult our own necessities; but we are then to consider, in the second, that the necessities of our neighbours have a Christian right to a part of what we have to spare.

The stress of this moral lies upon the preference of honest labour to idleness; and the refusal of relief, on the one hand, is intended only for a reproof to the inconsiderate loss of opportunity on the other. This does not hinder yet, but that the Ants, out of their abundance, ought to have relieved the Grasshopper in her distress, though it was her own fault that brought her to it; for if one man's *faults* could discharge another man of his *duty*, there would be no longer any place left for the common offices of society. To conclude, we have our failings, every one

of us; and the improvidence of my neighbour must not make me inhuman. The Ant did well to reprove the Grasshopper for her slothfulness; but she did ill, after that, to refuse her charity in her distress.

FABLE XXIX.

The Bald Cavalier.

WHEN periwigs were first used, and then chiefly to cover the defect of baldness, a certain Cavalier had one for that purpose, which passed for his own hair. But as he was one day riding out with some others a hunting, a sudden puff of wind blew off both his wig and his hat, and set the company in a loud laugh at his bald pate. He, for his part, fell a laughing with the rest, and said, Why, really, Gentlemen, this is merry enough; for how could I expect to keep other people's hair, who could not preserve my own.

MORALS.

The edge of a jest is quite blunted and turned off when a man has presence of mind to join in it against himself, or begin it.

When the loud laugh prevails at your expense,
All want of temper is but want of sense;
Would you disarm the sneerer of his jest,
Frown not, but laugh in concert with the rest.

REFLECTION.

A frank, easy way of openness and candour agrees best with all humours; and he that is over solicitous to conceal a defect, often does as good as make proclamation of it. And it is a turn of art in many cases, where a man lies open to ridicule, to anticipate the jest, and make sport with himself first.

The epigram of *Martial* upon a lady, who, in a case in point, was for hiding a defect like that of the bald Knight, and made use of false hair, carries with it the severer sting, as she was willing and studious to conceal it. The Poet, made *English*, says:—

The golden hair that *Galla* wears
  Is hers: who would have thought it?
She swears 'tis hers—and true she swears,
  For I know *where* she *bought* it.

FABLE XXX.

A Dog and a Cat.

NEVER were two creatures better together than a Dog and a Cat brought up in the same house from a Whelp and a Kitten; so kind, so gamesome and diverting, that it was half the entertainment of the family to see the gambols and love-tricks that passed betwixt them. Only it was observed, that still at meal-times, when scraps fell from the table, or a bone was thrown to them, they would be snarling and spitting at one another under the table like the worst of foes.

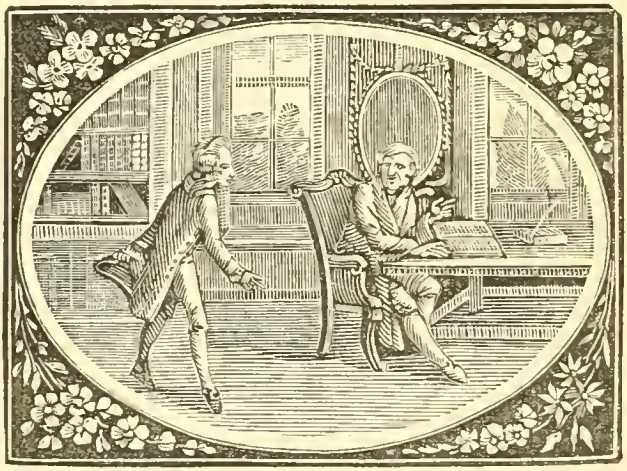
MORALS.

But as the sun, refulgent globe of light,
By mists obscur'd, may shine more dimly bright;
Or by some sable cloud its lustre veil'd,
Lie hid in darkness from the world conceal'd;
So every joy which mortals here can know
Is damp'd by sorrow, or is mix'd with woe.
Pleasure entire, from all assaults secure,
To no one's granted, no one can ensure.
Ungovern'd passions to such heights will rise,
That friendship's self oft falls a sacrifice;
A fire is kindled in the human breast,
By words misconstru'd, or a simple jest,
As some one relish often spoils a feast.
Thus sportful, frisking on the sunny green,
Two lambkins loving are not seldom seen:
Off from the flock they to a distance stray,
And all a battle represent in play;
Till some unlucky thrusts rouse up their rage,
Pretence is gone, in earnest they engage.
Those whom she sung, the muse reluctant sees
Differ for causes trivial as these;
And full of anguish, sighing and alone,
Pours out her deep-felt melancholy moan:—
"Where dwelt their mutual fondness in that hour
When love took leave, and kindness now no more?
Alas! no more, in social converse join'd,
Shall they partake the rapture of the mind?
Placid content, shall fell disgust succeed,
And vexing discord make enjoyment bleed?
Forbid it, Heav'n! and to them gracious deign
Their strict agreeing harmony again!
All jarring thoughts at utmost distance keep,
And bid the former in oblivion sleep!"

REFLECTION.

Here is a perfect emblem of the practices and friendships of the world. We contract little likings,

enter into agreeable conversations, and pass away the time so merrily and kindly together, that one would think it impossible for anything under the sun to break the interest; and yet upon the throwing in any cross interest among us, which is all one with the bone under the table; nay, upon a jealous thought, or a mistaken word or look, all former bonds are cancelled, the league broken, and the farce concludes in biting and scratching one another's eyes out. The same figure will serve for princes and states, public persons and private, married and single; people, in fine, of all professions and pretences.



FABLE XXXI.

An Impertinent and Philosopher.

A CERTAIN pragmatical, gay, fluttering Coxcomb would needs make a visit to a Philosopher. He found him alone in his study, and fell a wondering

how he could endure to lead so solitary a life. Sir, says the Philosopher, you are exceedingly mistaken, for I was in very good company till you came in.

MORALS.

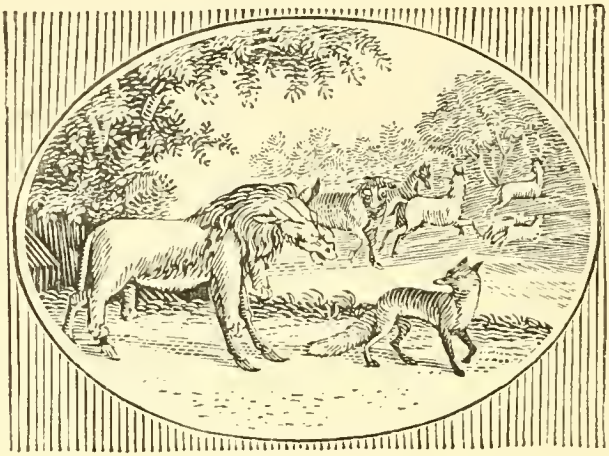
What the noisy and most numerous part of the world calls good company, is generally the most irksome and insipid thing in the world to a wise man; a mere round of folly and impertinence, and void of any kind of instruction or benefit to a reflecting mind. How preferable to such a man must it be to converse with the learned dead, rather than the unedifying and noisy living?

"Swift *is obscure, and* Addison *wants taste,*
Shakespeare *is low, and* Milton *all bombast*"—
Thus wit itself half-seeing fools condemn,
And sense and genius are all dark to them.

REFLECTION.

It is one of the most vexatious mortifications, perhaps, of a sober and studious man's life, to have his thoughts disordered, and the chain of his reason discomposed, by the importunity of a tedious and impertinent visit; especially if it be from a fool of quality, where the station of the man entitles him to all returns of good manners and respect. The drift of this fable is to tell us, that good books and good thoughts are the best company, and that they are mistaken, who think a wise man can ever be alone. It prepares us also to expect interruptions and disappointments, and to provide for them; but withal to take the best care we can to prevent the plague of ill company, by avoiding the occasions of it. The linking of a man of brains and honesty, with a lewd,

insipid companion, is effectually the emblem of that tyrant who bound the living and the dead together; and yet this is it which the impertinent takes for the relief of solitude, and that he calls company.



FABLE XXXII.

The Fox and the Ass.

AN Ass, finding a Lion's skin, disguised himself with it, and ranged about the forest, putting all the beasts that saw him into a bodily fear. After he had diverted himself thus for some time, he met a Fox; and being desirous to fright him too, as well as the rest, he leapt at him with some fierceness, and endeavoured to imitate the roaring of the Lion. Your humble servant, says the Fox; if you had held your tongue, I might have taken you for a Lion, as others did; but now you bray, I know who you are.

MORALS.

The more distant any person is from the thing he affects to appear, the stronger will the ridicule be which he excites, and the greater the inconveniencies into which he runs himself.

The fop, with empty jests and silly smile,
Women, or men like women, may beguile;
Howe'er with fools his senseless prate may pass,
The man of sense soon knows him for an Ass.

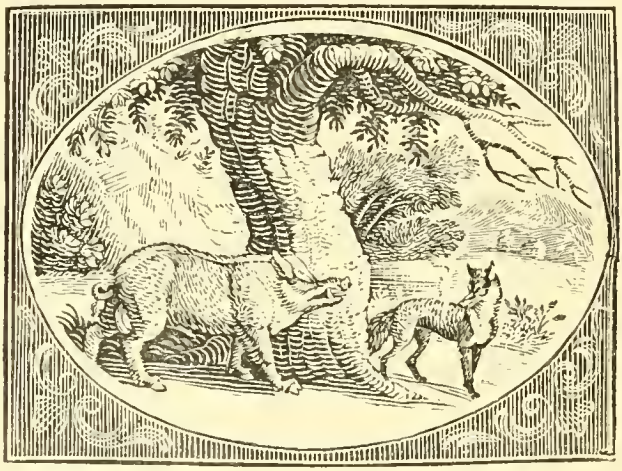
REFLECTION.

This is so trite and common a subject, that there is scarce any one who is ignorant of it. A man is known by his words, as a tree is by the fruit; and, if we would be apprised of the nature and qualities of any one, let him but discourse, and he himself will speak them to us, better than another can describe them. We may therefore perceive from this fable, how proper it is for those to hold their tongues who would not discover the shallowness of their understandings.

Asses and Owls, unseen, themselves betray,
When these attempt to hoot, or those to bray.

The deepest rivers are most silent: the greatest noise is ever found where there is the least depth of water. And it is a true observation, that those who are the weakest in understanding, and most slow of apprehension, are generally the strongest in opinion, and most precipitate in uttering their crude conceptions. When, with a secret awe, we regard the grave address and important mien of some senatorian person, whom we have chanced to meet in a coffee-house, what a speaker do we often think he must be, before we

hear him speak! his air breathes the seriousness of a privy councillor, and his erect aspect the dignity of an eminent patriot: But he utters himself, and undeceives us; he brays, and tells the whole company what he is.



FABLE XXXIII.

A Boar and a Fox.

AS a Boar was whetting his teeth against a tree, up comes a Fox to him. Pray, what do you mean by that? says he. I do it, says the Boar, to be in readiness in case of an attack by an enemy. But, replies the Fox, I see no occasion for it, for there is no enemy near you. Well, says the Boar, but I see occasion for it; for when I come once to be set upon, it will be too late for me to be whetting when I should be fighting.

MORALS.

A discreet man should have a reserve of everything that is necessary beforehand, that when the time comes for him to make use of them, he may not be in a hurry and confusion.

Wise are the people, who in peace prepare
Their fleets and armies for the distant war;
Who ne'er in treaties and conventions trust,
Nor leave the sword, though it be sheath'd, to rust.

REFLECTION.

He that is not idle when he is at leisure, may play with his business. A discreet man should have a reserve of everything that is necessary beforehand; that when the time comes for him to make use of them, he may not be in a hurry and a confusion. A wise General has not his men to discipline, or his ammunition to provide, when the trumpet sounds *To Arms;* but sets apart his times of exercise for one, and his magazines for the other, in the calm season of peace. We hope to live to a good old age: Should we not, then, lay up a store of conveniences against that time, when we shall be most in want of them, and least able to procure them? We must die; nay, never start; we must. Are there not some necessary things for us to transact before we depart; at least, some trifle or other for us to bequeath, which a sudden stroke may prevent us from doing? Sure there is. And if so, how inexcusable shall we be, if we defer the execution of it till the alarm comes upon us. *I did not think of it*, is an expression unworthy a wise man's mouth; and was only intended for the use of fools.

FABLE XXXIV.

The Discontented Ass.

AN Ass, in a hard winter, wished for a little warm weather, and a mouthful of fresh grass to nap upon, in exchange for a heartless truss of straw, and a cold lodging. In good time the warm weather and the fresh grass came on ; but so much toil and business along with it, that the Ass grows quickly as sick of the spring as he was of the winter. He next longs for summer ; and when that comes, finds his toils and drudgery greater than in the spring ; and then he fancies he shall never be well till autumn comes : but there again, what with carrying apples, grapes, fuel, winter provisions, and such like, he finds himself in a greater hurry than ever. In fine, when he has trod the circle of the year in a course of restless labour, his last prayer is for winter again, and that he may but take up his rest where he began his complaint.

MORALS.

The life of an unsteady man runs away in a course of vain wishes, and unprofitable discontent; an unsettled mind can never be at rest. There is no season without its business.

Who lacks the pleasures of a tranquil mind,
Will something wrong in every station find;
His mind unsteady, and on changes bent,
Is always shifting, yet is ne'er content.

REFLECTION.

There is no measure to be taken of an unsteady mind: but still it is either too much or too little, too soon or too late. The love of novelty begets and increases the love of novelty; and the oftener we change, the more dangerous and troublesome do we find this itch of variety to be. The Ass was sick of the winter, sicker yet of the spring, more sick still of the summer; and sickest of all of the autumn; till he is brought, in the end, to compound for his first condition again, and so take up with that for his satisfaction, which he reckoned upon before for his misfortune.

Thus it is, when fickle and foolish people will be prescribing to, and refining upon, the wise and gracious appointments of the Maker of the world. They know not what they *are*, and they know not what they *would be*, any farther, than that they would not be what *they are*. Let their present state in the world be what it will, there is still something or other in it that makes their lives wearisome: and they are as peevish company to themselves too, as they are to their friends and neighbours; for there is

not one circumstance in nature, but they shall find matter to pick a quarrel at: the *present* is only the course of so many moments into time *to come:* were it not better then for people at first to sit down contentedly in the post where Providence has placed them, and *to do their duty in that state of life,* as they are early and excellently taught, *to which it has pleased God to call them,* than be forced to do it at last, by the dear bought experience of their follies?

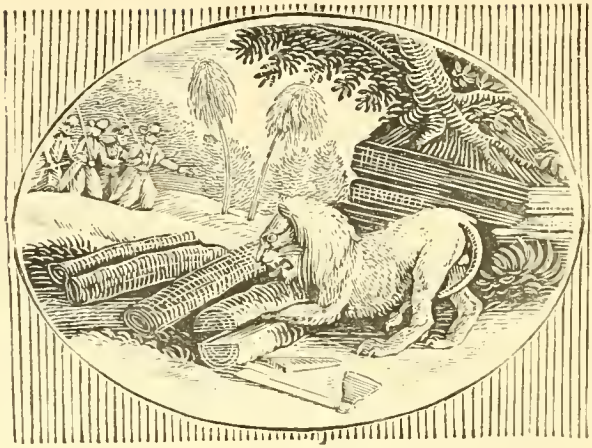
This, however, we say, not to bar honest industry, or a sober application to those studies or means that may probably contribute to the mending of a man's fortune; provided that he set up his resolution beforehand, not to let himself down below the dignity of a wise man, be the issue of his endeavours what it will. For he that is not content at *present,* carries the same weakness along with him to the *next remove;* and whoever either passionately covets any thing that he has not, or feels himself glutted with a satiety of what he possesses, has already lost his hold: so that if we would be happy, we must fix upon some foundation that can never deceive us, and govern ourselves by the measures of sobriety and justice.

If we look round us in the world, and likewise examine our own hearts, we shall find that one of the principal sources of our discontent, is the making of a false estimate of our own and our neighbours' abilities, and thence drawing conclusions that lead us into difficulties. Does any citizen hold a considerable office? Or is he eminent for his fortune? That *envy,* inherent in our nature, prompts us to examine, by what title he enjoys those benefits and distinctions, that lift him above the level of the community; the

same principle leads us to overlook, in some measure, his good qualities, and greatly to exaggerate his bad ones. We are tempted next to make a comparison between him and ourselves, and by looking through the other end of the perspective, imagine that the balance is greatly in our favour, and without further process or examination conclude, that the world ought to abide by our decision; hence the numberless disappointments we meet with; hence all the uneasiness we feel in every stage and station of life. Were we to pay a proper attention to that celebrated sentence of the Delphic oracle,

"KNOW THYSELF,"

we should experience fewer disappointments, become better members of society, and enjoy a greater portion of that tranquillity of soul, that internal serenity of mind, without which every station in life, however garnished with honours, however loaded with riches, may be *pronounced miserable.*



FABLE XXXV.

The Undutiful Young Lion.

AMONG other good counsels that an old experienced Lion gave to his whelp, this was one, that he should never contend with a man: for, says he, if ever you do, you 'll be worsted. The little Lion gave his father the hearing, and kept the advice in his thought, but it never went near his heart. When he came to be grown up, afterwards, and in the flower of his strength and vigour, about he ranges to look for a man to grapple with. In his ramble he met with a yoke of oxen, and then with a horse, saddled and bridled, and severally asked them if they were men; but they saying they were not, he goes after this to one that was cleaving of blocks: D'ye hear? says the Lion, you seem to be a man: And a man I am, says the fellow. That 's well, quoth the Lion, and dare you fight with me? Yes, says the

man, I dare: why, I can tear all these blocks to pieces, you see. Put your feet now into this gap, where you see an iron thing there, and try what you can do. The Lion presently put his paws into the gaping of the wood, and with one lusty pluck made it give way, and out drops the wedge; the wood immediately closing upon it, there was the Lion caught by the toes. The Wood-man presently upon this raises the country, and the Lion finding what a strait he was in, gave one hearty twitch and got his feet out of the trap, but left his claws behind him. So away he goes back to his father, all lame and bloody, with this confession in his mouth: Alas! my dear father, says he, *this had never been, if I had followed your advice.*

MORALS.

The vengeance of Heaven, sooner or later, treads upon the heels of wilful disobedience to parents.

When wayward children in the pride of youth,
Scorn wisdom's precepts, and the curb of truth;
Laugh at experience, and her sagest rules,
And hold restraints the doting fits of fools;
They thoughtless rush, where folly leads the way,
Where evils throng, and vice holds lordly sway.
Yet hoary age by long experience knows,
Where vices flourish, and where evil grows;
With cautious fondness for the budding mind,
Warns from the path, where ill with ill's combin'd;
Whilst heedless youth, in all the pomp of pride,
Spurn at his prudence, and his laws deride.
A few short years disperse the dazzling shade,
Which fame excited, and which transports made;

Wearied and pall'd with pleasure's fleeting joys,
Which madness raves for, and which health destroys;
Too late they find, by sage experience taught,
The rules of age are with true wisdom fraught.

REFLECTION.

Children are not to reason upon obedience to parents, provided there be nothing in the command, or in the imposition, that is simply evil; for headstrong and undutiful children seldom escape a remarkable punishment, which gives them reason to say to their parents, *this had never been, if I had followed your advice.*

FABLE XXXVI.

The Countryman and Ass.

AN old fellow was feeding an Ass in a fine green meadow; and being alarmed with the sudden approach of the enemy, was impatient with the Ass to put himself forward, and fly with all the speed that he was able. The Ass asked him, Whether or

no he thought the enemy would clap two pair of panniers upon his back? The man said, No, there was no fear of that. Why then, says the Ass, I will not stir an inch; for what is it to me who my master is, since I shall but carry my panniers as usual?

MORALS.

Men in a fright, or alarmed with the apprehensions of some imminent danger to themselves, often fly for succour to those from whom they have not deserved any. It is prudent so to behave in our prosperity, as that we may make every one our friend in times of adversity: for no one is exempted from the mutability of fortune.

The man that is poor may be void of all care,
If there's nothing to hope, he has nothing to fear:
Whether stocks rise or fall, or whate'er be the news,
He is sure not to win, and has nothing to lose.

REFLECTION.

This fable shows us how much in the wrong the poorer sort of people most commonly are, when they are under any concern about the revolutions of a government. All the alteration which they can feel is, perhaps, in the name of their sovereign, or some such important trifle. But they cannot well be poorer, or made to work harder than they did before. And yet how are they sometimes imposed upon, and drawn in by the artifices of a few mistaken or designing men, to foment factions, and raise rebellions, in cases where they can get nothing by the success; but, if they miscarry, are in danger of suffering an ignominious, untimely death.

FABLE XXXVII.

Joy and Sorrow.

JOY and Sorrow, two twin-sisters, once quarrelled vehemently who should have the preference; and being unable to decide the matter, left it to *Minos* to determine. He tried all means to make them agree and go hand in hand together, as loving sisters ought; but finding his counsel had no effect upon them, he decreed that they should be linked together in a chain; and each of them in turn should be perpetually treading upon the heel of the other; and not a pin matter then, says he, which goes foremost.

MORALS.

No man is to presume in prosperity, or despair in adversity; for good and ill fortune do as naturally succeed one another, as day and night.

The Gods one time, as poets feign,
Would pleasure *intermix with* pain ;
And perfectly incorporate so,
As one from t'other none might know ;
That mortals might alike partake
The Good and Evil which they make.

In mighty bowl they put these twain,
And stirr'd and stirr'd, but all in vain :
Pleasure *would sometimes float aloft,*
And pain *keep* pleasure *down as oft :*
Yet still from one another fly,
Detesting either's company.

The Gods, who saw they sooner might
Mix fire and water, day and night,
Unanimously then decreed
They should alternately succeed ;
Each other's motions still pursue,
And a perpetual round renew :
Yet still divided should remain,
Tho' link'd together with a chain.

Thence comes it that we never see
A perfect bliss or misery ;
Each happiness has some alloy ;
And grief *succeeded is by* joy.
The happiest *mortal needs must own*
He has a time of sorrow *known :*
Nor can the poorest *wretch deny*
But in his life he felt a joy.

REFLECTION.

It is the lot of mankind to be happy and miserable by turns. The wisdom of Providence will have it so; and it is exceedingly for our advantage that so it should be. There is nothing pure and unmixed under the heavens; and if there were, such an abstracted simplicity would be neither nourishing nor profitable to us. By the mediation of this mixture,

we have the comfort of Hope to support us in our distresses, and the apprehensions of a change to keep a check upon us in the very pride of our greatness: so that by this vicissitude of *good* and *evil* we are kept steady in our philosophy and in our religion. The one minds us of God's omnipotence and justice; the other, of His goodness and mercy: the one tells us, there is no trusting to our own strength; the other preaches faith and resignation in the prospect of an overruling Providence that takes care of us. What is it but sickness that gives us a taste of health? bondage, the relish of liberty? and what but the experience of want that enhances the value of plenty? that which we call ease is only an indolence or a freedom from pain; and there is no such thing as felicity or misery but by comparison. It is very true, that hopes and fears are the snares of life in some respects, but they are the reliefs of it in others. Now for fear of the worst, however, on either hand every man has it in his power, by the force of natural reason, to avoid the danger of falling either into presumption or despair.

FABLE XXXVIII.

The Fox and the Ape.

ONCE upon a time, the beasts were so void of reason as to choose an Ape for their King. He had danced, and diverted them with playing antic tricks, and truly nothing would serve but they must anoint him their sovereign. Accordingly crowned he was, and affected to look very wise and politic. But the Fox, vexed at his heart to see his fellow-brutes act so foolishly, was resolved the first opportunity to convince them of their sorry choice, and punish their jackanapes of a king for his presumption. Soon after, spying a trap in a ditch, which was baited with a piece of flesh, he went and informed the Ape of it, as a treasure, which, being found upon the waste, belonged to his Majesty only. The Ape, dreaming nothing of the matter, went very briskly to take possession, but had no sooner laid his paws upon the

bait, than he was caught in the trap; where, betwixt shame and anger, he began to reproach the Fox, calling him rebel and traitor, and threatening to be revenged of him. At all which *Reynard* laughed heartily; and going off, added, with a sneer, You a king, and not understand trap!

MORALS.

When Apes are in power, Foxes will never be wanting to play upon them.

When nations raise an idiot to the throne,
He shows the people's weakness and his own.

REFLECTION.

A weak man should not aspire to be a king; for if he were, in the end it would prove as inconvenient to himself, as disadvantageous to the public. To be qualified for such an office—an office of the last importance to mankind—the person should be of a distinguished prudence and most unblemished integrity; too honest to impose upon others, and too penetrating to be imposed upon; thoroughly acquainted with the laws and genius of the realm he is to govern; brave, but not passionate; good-natured, but not soft; aspiring at just esteem; despising vain-glory; without superstition; without hypocrisy. When thrones have been filled by people of a different turn from this, histories show what a wretched figure they always made; what tools they were to particular persons, and what plagues to their subjects in general. They who studied their passions

and entered into their foibles, led them by the nose as they pleased; and took them off from the guardianship of the public, by some paltry amusement, that themselves might have the better opportunity to rifle and plunder it.

Fable XXXIX.

The Satyr and the Traveller.

A SATYR, as he was ranging the Forest in an exceeding cold, snowy season, met with a Traveller half-starved with the extremity of the weather. He took compassion on him, and kindly invited him home, to a warm comfortable cave he had in the hollow of a rock. As soon as they had entered and sat down, notwithstanding there was a good fire in the place, the chilly Traveller could not forbear blowing his finger ends. Upon the Satyr's asking him why he did so, he answered: That he did it to

warm his hands. The honest silvan having seen little of the world, admired a man who was master of so valuable a quality as that of blowing heat, and therefore was resolved to entertain him in the best manner he could. He spread the table before him with dried fruits of several sorts; and produced a remnant of old cordial wine, which, as the rigour of the season made very proper, he mulled with some warm spices, infused over the fire, and presented to his shivering guest. But this the Traveller thought fit to blow likewise; and upon the Satyr's demanding a reason why he blowed again, he replied: To cool his dish. This second answer provoked the Satyr's indignation, as much as the first had kindled his surprise. So, taking the man by the shoulder, he thrust him out of doors, saying: He would have nothing to do with a wretch who had so vile a quality as to blow hot and cold with the same mouth.

MORALS.

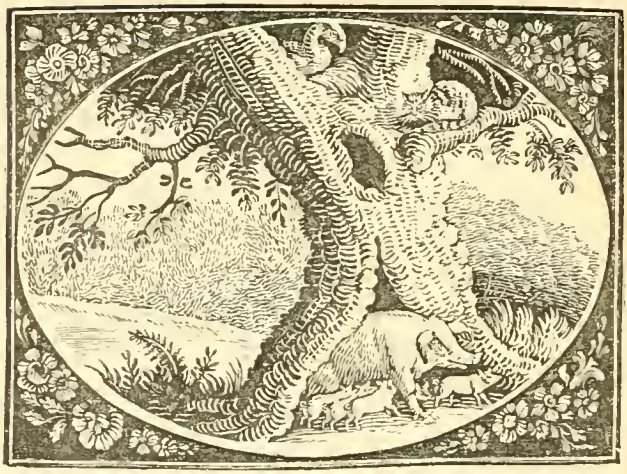
There is no conversing with any man that carries two faces under one hood.

With such an inmate who would be perplext,
One hour all coldness, and all heat the next!
Who would his fev'rish shiv'ring fits endure?
That ague of the heart, no drug can cure.

REFLECTION.

Though the poor Traveller in the Fable was not guilty of any real crime in what he did, yet one cannot help approving the honest simplicity of the Satyr,

who could not be reconciled to such double dealing. In the moral sense of the Fable, nothing can be more offensive to one of a sincere heart, than he that blows with a different breath from the same mouth; who flatters a man to his face, and reviles him behind his back. Some again, just like this man, to serve a present view, will blow nothing but what is warm, benevolent, and cherishing; and when they have raised the expectations of a dependant to a degree which they think may prove troublesome, can, with putting on a cold air, easily chill and blast all his blooming hopes. But such a temper, whether it proceeds from a designed or natural levity, is detestable, and has been the cause of much trouble and mortification to many a brave deserving man. Unless the tenor of a man's life be always true and consistent with itself, the less one has to do with him the better.



FABLE XL.

The Eagle, the Cat, and the Sow.

AN Eagle had built her nest upon the top branches of an old oak. A wild Cat inhabited a hole in the middle; and in the hollow part at the bottom was a Sow, with a whole litter of pigs. A happy neighbourhood; and might long have continued so, had it not been for the wicked insinuations of the designing Cat. For, first of all, up she crept to the Eagle; and, good neighbour, says she, we shall be all undone: That filthy Sow yonder does nothing but lie routing at the foot of the tree, and, as I suspect, intends to grub it up, that she may the more easily come at our young ones. For my part I will take care of my own concerns; you may do as you please, but I will watch her motions, though I stay at home

this month for it. When she had said this, which could not fail of putting the Eagle into a great fright, down she went, and made a visit to the Sow at the bottom; and, putting on a sorrowful face, I hope, says she, you do not intend to go abroad to-day? Why not? says the Sow. Nay, replies the other, you may do as you please; but I overheard the Eagle tell her young ones, that she would treat them with a pig the first time she saw you go out; and I am not sure but she may take up with a kitten in the mean-time; so, good-morrow to you; you will excuse me, I must go and take care of the little folks at home. Away she went accordingly; and, by contriving to steal out softly at nights for her prey, and to stand watching and peeping all day at her hole, as under great concern, she made such an impression upon the Eagle and the Sow, that neither of them dared to venture abroad for fear of the other. The consequence of which was, that themselves, and their young ones, in a little time were all starved, and made prize of by the treacherous Cat and her kittens.

MORALS.

There can be no peace in any state or family where whisperers and tale-bearers are encouraged.

Ill fares that neighbourhood, where sland'rers meet
With easy faith to back their base deceit:
From house to house the plague of discord spreads,
And brings down ruin on their hapless heads.

REFLECTION.

Busy-bodies and intermeddlers are a dangerous sort of people to have to do withal; for there is no mischief that may not be wrought by the craft and management of a double tongue, with a foolish credulity to work upon. There is hardly a greater pest to government, to conversation, to the peace of societies, relations, and families, than officious tale-bearers and busy intermeddlers. These pick-thanks are enough to set mankind together by the ears; they live upon calumny and slander, and cover themselves, too, under the seal of secrecy and friendship; these are the people who *set their neighbours' houses on fire to roast their own eggs.* The sin of traducing is diabolical, according to the very letter; and if the office be artificially managed, it is enough to put the whole world into a flame, and nobody the wiser which way it came. The mischief may be promoted, by misrepresenting, misunderstanding, or misinterpreting our neighbour's thoughts, words, and deeds; and no wound so mortal, as that where the poison works under a pretence of kindness: nay, there are ways of commendation, and insinuations of affection and esteem, that kill a man as sure as a bullet. This practice is the bane of trust and confidence; and it is as frequent in the intrigues of courts and states, as in the most ordinary accidents of life. It is enough to break the neck of all honest purposes, to stifle all generous and public-spirited motions, and to suppress all honourable inclinations in the very conception. But, next to the practice of these lewd offices, deliver all honest men, say I, from lying at the mercy of those that encourage and entertain them.

Fable XLI.

The Cock and the Fox.

A COCK being perched among the branches of a lofty Tree, crowed aloud, so that the shrillness of his voice echoed through the wood and invited a Fox to the place, who was prowling in that neighbourhood, in quest of his prey. But *Reynard*, finding the Cock was inaccessible, by reason of the height of his situation, had recourse to stratagem, in order to decoy him down; so, approaching the tree, Cousin, says he, I am heartily glad to see you; but at the same time I cannot forbear expressing my uneasiness at the inconvenience of the place, which will not let me pay my respects to you in a handsomer manner; though I suppose you will come down presently, and so that difficulty is easily removed. Indeed, Cousin, says the Cock, to tell you the truth I don't think it

safe to venture myself upon the ground, for though I am convinced how much you are my friend, yet I may have the misfortune to fall into the clutches of some other beast, and what will become of me then? O dear, says *Reynard*, is it possible that you can be so ignorant, as not to know of the peace that has been lately proclaimed between all kinds of birds and beasts; and that we are, for the future, to forbear hostilities on all sides, and to live in the utmost love and harmony, and that under penalty of suffering the severest punishment that can be inflicted? All this while the Cock seemed to give little attention to what was said, but stretched out his neck, as if he saw something at a distance: Cousin, says the Fox, what's that you look at so earnestly? Why, says the Cock, I think I see a pack of hounds yonder a little way off. Oh then, says the Fox, your humble servant, I must be gone. Nay, pray, Cousin, don't go, says the Cock, I 'm just coming down; sure you are not afraid of dogs in these peaceable times. No, no, says he; but ten to one whether they have heard of the proclamation yet.

MORALS.

Perfidious people are naturally to be suspected in reports that favour their own interest.

Take courage, hence, ye wise, nor dread deceit;
Good sense and craft, how seldom do they meet!
Tho' keen, yet feeble, are the sharper's tools,
And cunning's the peculiar gift of fools.

REFLECTION.

It is a very agreeable thing to see craft repelled by cunning; more especially to behold the snares of the wicked broken and defeated by the discreet management of the innocent. The moral of this Fable principally puts us in mind, not to be too credulous towards the insinuations of those who are already distinguished by their want of faith and honesty. When, therefore, any such would draw us into a compliance with their destructive measures, by a pretended civility and extraordinary concern for our interest, we should consider such proposals in their true light, as a bait artfully placed to conceal the fatal hook, which is intended to draw us into captivity and thraldom. An honest man, with a little plain sense, may do a thousand advantageous things for the public good; and, without being master of much address or rhetoric, as easily convince people that his designs are intended for their welfare: But a wicked designing politician, though he has a tongue as eloquent as ever spoke, may sometimes be disappointed in his projects and be foiled in his schemes; especially when their destructive texture is so coarsely spun, and the threads of mischief are so large in them, as to be seen even by those whose senses are scarce perfect enough to see and understand them.

FABLE XLII.

Age to be Honoured.

APERT and inconsiderate young Man happened to meet an old Man, whose age and infirmity had brought his body almost to the shape of a bent bow. Pray, father, says he, will you sell your bow? Save your money, you fool, says the other; for when you come to my years, you shall have such a bow for nothing.

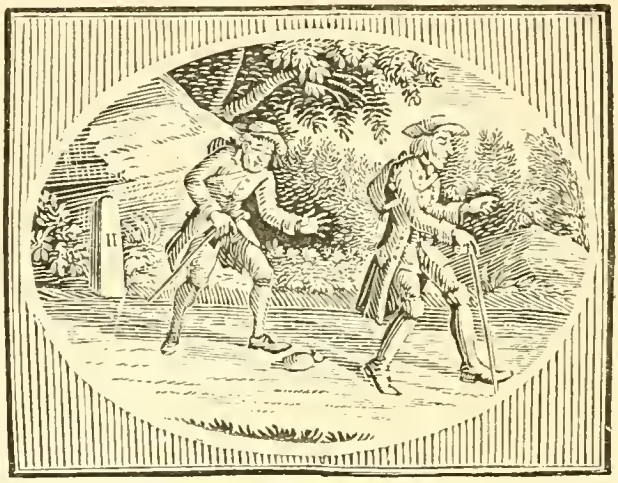
MORALS.

There cannot be a greater folly and impertinence, than that of young men scoffing at the infirmities of age.

Though vig'rous health thy tide of life sustains,
And youthful manhood revels in thy veins:
With rev'rend awe regard the bending sage,
Nor thoughtless mock th' infirmities of age.

Reflection.

We are all born to die, and it is every jot as certain that we shall go out of the world, as that we are already come into it: we are helpless in infancy; ungovernable in youth; our strength and vigour scarce outlast a morning sun; our infirmities hasten upon us as our years advance, and we grow helpless in our old age as in our infancy. What, then, have the best of us to boast of? Even time and human frailty alone will bring us to our end without the help of any accidents or distempers; so that our decays are as much the works of nature, as the first principles of our being; and the young man's conceit of the crooked bow is no better than an irreverent way of making sport with the course of Providence; besides shewing the folly of scoffing at that in another which he himself was sure to come to at last, or worse.



FABLE XLIII.

The Splenetic Traveller.

A SPLENETIC and a facetious man were once upon a journey: the former went slugging on with a thousand cares and troubles in his head, exclaiming over and over: "Lord, what shall I do to live?" The other jogged merrily away, and left his matters to Providence and good fortune. "Well, brother," says the sorrowful wight, "how can you be so frolicksome now? As I am a sinner, my heart's e'en ready to break for fear I should want bread." "Come, come," says the other, "fall back, fall edge, I have fixed my resolution, and my mind's at rest." "Ay, but for all that," says the other, "I have known the confidence of as resolute people as yourself has deceived them in the conclusion;" and so the poor man fell into another fit of doubting and musing, till he started out of it all on a sudden:

"Good Sir!" says he, "what if I should fall blind?" and so he walked a good way before his companion with his eyes shut, to try how it would be if that misfortune should befall him. In this interim, his fellow-traveller, who followed him, found a purse of money upon the way, which rewarded his trust in Providence; whereas the other missed that encounter as a punishment of his distrust; for the purse had been his, as he went first, if he had not put himself out of condition of seeing it.

MORALS.

He that commits himself to Providence is sure of a friend in time of need; while an anxious distrust of the divine goodness makes a man more and more unworthy of it, and miserable beforehand for fear of being so afterwards.

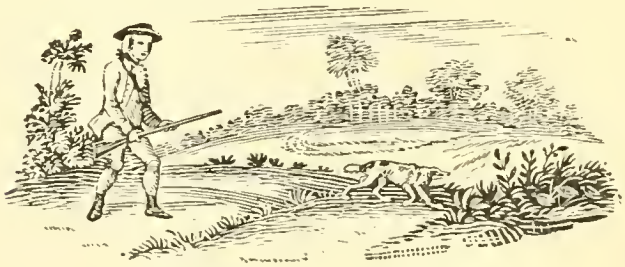
Who with vain fancies do themselves possess,
Are never bless'd, or can never bless;
Their life perplex'd, and fretful to no end—
The truly wise on Providence depend.

REFLECTION.

The two opposite humours of a cheerful trust in Providence and a suspicious diffidence of it, with the ordinary effects and consequences of the one and the other, are very well set forth here for our instruction and comfort. The Divine goodness never fails those that depend upon it, provided that, according to the advice of *Hercules* to the *Carter*, they put their own shoulders to the work.

The most wretched sort of people under the sun are your dreamers upon events, your low-spirited

foreboders, supposers, and putters of cases: they are still calculating within themselves, what if this or that calamity, judgment, or disaster should befall them? and so they really suffer the evils they dread most. It is very certain, that what we *fear* we *feel;* besides that, fancy breeds misery as naturally as it does the small-pox. Set a whimsical head once agog upon sprites and goblins, and he will be ready to squirt his wits at his own shadow. There is no surer remedy for this superstitious and desponding weakness, than first to govern ourselves by the best improvement of that reason which Providence has given us for a guide; and then, when we have done our own part, to commit all cheerfully for the rest to the good pleasure of Heaven, with trust and resignation. Why should I not as well comfort myself with the *hope* of what may be, as torment myself with the *fear* of it? he that distrusts in God's providence, does effectually put himself out of His protection.



FABLE XLIV.

The Young Man and the Swallow.

A PRODIGAL young spendthrift, who had wastèd his whole patrimony in taverns and gaming-houses among lewd, idle company, was taking a melancholy walk near a brook. It was in the month of *January*, and happened to be one of those warm sunshiny days which sometimes smile upon us even in that wintry season of the year; and to make it the more flattering, a swallow, which had made its appearance by mistake too soon, flew skimming along upon the surface of the water. The giddy youth, observing this, without any further consideration, concluded that summer was now come, and that he should have little or no occasion for clothes, so went and pawned them at the broker's, and ventured the money for one stake more, among his sharping companions. When this too was gone the same way

with the rest, he took another solitary walk in the same place as before. But the weather, being severe and frosty, had made everything look with an aspect very different from what it did before: the brook was quite frozen over, and the poor swallow lay dead upon the bank of it; the very sight of which cooled the young spark's brains, and coming to a kind of sense of his misery, he reproached the deceased bird as the author of all his misfortunes: Ah, wretch that thou wert! says he, thou hast undone both thyself and me, who was so credulous as to depend upon thee.

MORALS.

Some will listen to no conviction but what they derive from fatal experience.

Still blind to reason, nature, and his God,
Youth *follows* pleasure, *till he feels the rod*
Of sad experience, *then bemoans his fate,*
Nor sees his folly *till it is too late.*

REFLECTION.

They who frequent taverns and gaming-houses, and keep bad company, should not wonder if they are reduced, in a very small time, to penury and want. The wretched young fellows who once addict themselves to such a scandalous kind of life, scarce think of, or attend to, any one thing besides. They seem to have nothing else in their heads, but how they may squander what they have got, and where they may get more when that is gone. They do not make the same use of their reason that other people

do; but, like the jaundiced eye, view everything in that false light in which their distemper and debauchery represent it. The young man in the Fable gives us a pretty example of this; he sees a swallow in the midst of winter, and instead of being surprised at it, as a very irregular and extraordinary thing, concludes from thence that it is summer, as if he had never thought before about the season. Well, the result of this wise conclusion is of a piece with the conclusion itself; if it is summer, he shall not want so many clothes, therefore he sells them,—for what? For more money to squander away; as if (had his observation been just) summer would have lasted all the year round. But the true result and conclusion of all this is: When both his money and clothes are irrecoverably gone, he comes to his right senses, is ready to perish with hunger, to starve with cold, and to tear his own flesh with remorse and vexation at his former stupidity.

FABLE XLV.

The Brother and Sister.

A CERTAIN man had two children, a son and a daughter: The boy beautiful and handsome enough; the girl not quite so well. They were both very young, and happened one day to be playing near the looking-glass, which stood on their mother's toilet. The boy, pleased with the novelty of the thing, viewed himself for some time, and, in a wanton roguish manner, took notice to the girl how handsome he was. She resented it, and could not bear the insolent manner in which he did it; for she understood it (how could she do otherwise) as intended for a direct affront to her. Therefore she ran immediately to her father, and, with a great deal of aggravation, complained of her brother; particularly, for having acted so effeminate a part as to look in a glass, and meddle with things which belonged to women only.

The father, embracing them both with much tenderness and affection, told them, that he should like to have them both look in the glass every day; to the intent that you, says he to the boy, if you think that face of yours handsome, you may not disgrace and spoil it by an ugly temper and a foul behaviour. You, says he, speaking to the girl, that you may make up for the defects of your person, if there be any, by the sweetness of your manners and the agreeableness of your conversation.

MORALS.

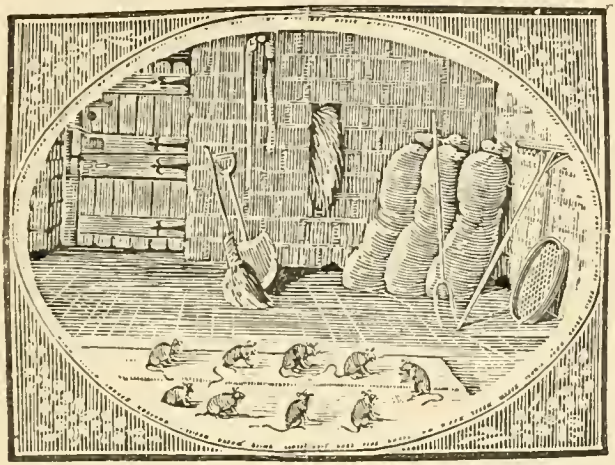
We often make a false estimate in preferring our ornamental talents to our useful ones.

Ill manners may deform the fairest face,
But gentleness gives ugliness a grace:
Sure snarling Veny's *beauty less we prize,*
Than Pug's *black nose with his good-natured eyes.*

REFLECTION.

There is scarce anything we see in the world, especially what belongs to and hangs about our own person, but is capable of affording us matter for some serious and useful consideration. And this Fable, notwithstanding the scene of it is laid at the very beginning and entrance of life, yet utters a doctrine worthy the attention of every stage and degree thereof, from the child to the old man. Let each of us take a glass, and view himself considerately. He that is vain and self-conceited, will find beauties in every feature, and his whole shape will be without

fault. Let it be so; yet, if he would be complete, he must take care that the inward man does not detract from and disgrace the outward; that the depravity of his manners does not spoil his face, nor the wrongness of his behaviour distort his limbs; or, which is the same thing, make his whole person odious and detestable to the eye of his beholders. Is any one modest in this respect, and deficient of himself? Or has he indeed blemishes and imperfections, which may depreciate him in the sight of mankind? Let him strive to improve the faculties of the mind, where perhaps nature has not crampt him; and to excel in the beauties of a good temper and an agreeable conversation, the charms of which are so much more lasting and unalterably endearing, than those of the other sort. They who are beautiful in person have this peculiar advantage, that, with a moderate regard to complaisance and good manners, they bespeak every one's opinion in their favour. But then, be the outside of a man ever so rough and uncouth, if his acquired accomplishments are but sweet and engaging, how easily do we overlook the rest, and value him, like an oriental jewel, not by a glittering outside, which is common to baser stones, but by his true intrinsic worth, his bright imagination, his clear reason, and the transparent sincerity of his honest heart.



Fable XLVI.

The Mice in Council.

THE Mice called a General Council; and, having met, after the doors were locked, entered into a free consultation about ways and means how to render their fortunes and estates more secure from the danger of the Cat. Many things were offered, and much was debated, *pro* and *con*, upon the matter. At last a young Mouse, in a fine florid speech, concluded upon an expedient, and that the only one, which was to put them, for the future, entirely out of the power of the enemy: and this was, that the Cat should wear a bell about her neck, which upon the least motion would give the alarm, and be a signal for them to retire into their holes. This speech was received with great applause, and it was even proposed by some, that the Mouse who made it should

have the thanks of the assembly. Upon which, an old grave Mouse, who had sat silent all the while, stood up, and in another speech, owned that the contrivance was admirable, and the author of it, without doubt, an ingenious Mouse; but, he said, he thought it would not be so proper to vote him thanks, till he should farther inform them how this bell was to be fastened about the Cat's neck, and what Mouse would undertake to do it.

MORALS.

The different lights, in which things appear to different judgments, recommend candour to the opinions of others, even at the time we retain our own.

Not urged by vain ambition's *airy dreams,*
Or specious wit, *does* wisdom *form her schemes,*
Poise well the scales, with due reflection *scan*
The means proposed, *and then adopt a plan.*

REFLECTION.

Many things appear feasible in speculation, which are afterwards found to be impracticable. And since the execution of anything is that which is to complete and finish its very existence, what raw counsellors are those who advise, what precipitate politicians those who proceed, to the management of things in their nature incapable of answering their own expectations, or their promises to others. At the same time, the Fable teaches us not to expose ourselves in any of our little politic coffee-house committees, by determining what should be done upon every occurrence of maladministration, when we have

neither commission nor power to execute it. He that, upon such occasion, adjudges, as a preservative for the state, that this or that should be applied to the neck of those who have been enemies to it, will appear full as ridiculous as the Mouse in the Fable, when the question is asked, Who shall put it there? In reality we do but expose ourselves to the hatred of some, and the contempt of others, when we inadvertently utter our impracticable speculations, in respect of the public, either in private company or authorised assemblies.

Fable XLVII.

The Old Man and Death.

A POOR feeble old man, who had crawled out into a neighbouring wood to gather a few sticks, had made up his bundle, and, laying it over his shoulders, was trudging homeward with it; but, what with age,

and the length of the way, and the weight of his burden, he grow so faint and weak that he sunk under it; and, as he sat on the ground, called upon Death to come, once for all, and ease him of his troubles. Death no sooner heard him, but he came and demanded of him what he wanted. The poor old creature, who little thought Death had been so near, and frightened almost out of his senses with his terrible aspect, answered him trembling: That having by chance let his bundle of sticks fall, and being too infirm to get it up himself, he had made bold to call upon him to help him; that, indeed, this was all he wanted at present; and that he hoped his Worship was not offended with him for the liberty he had taken in so doing.

MORALS.

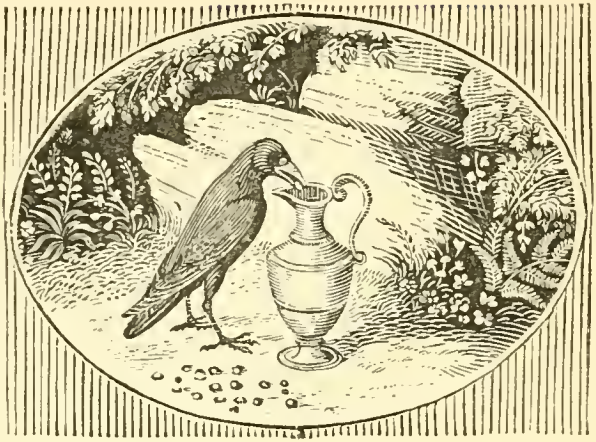
Men under calamity may seem to wish for death; but they seldom bid him welcome when he stares them in the face.

"Oh with what joy would I resign my breath!"
The wretch exclaims, and prays for instant death:
The fiend approaching, he inverts his pray'r,
"Oh grant me life, and double all my care!"

REFLECTION.

This Fable gives us a lively representation of the general behaviour of mankind towards that grim king of terrors, Death. Such liberties do they take with him behind his back, that upon every little cross accident which happens in their way, Death is imme-

diately called upon; and they even wish it might be lawful for them to finish by their own hands a life so odious, so perpetually tormenting and vexatious. When, let but Death only offer to make his appearance, and the very sense of his near approach almost does the business: Oh then, all they want is a longer life; and they would be glad to come off so well, as to have their old burden laid upon their shoulders again. One may well conclude what an utter aversion they, who are in youth, health, and vigour of body, have to dying, when age, poverty, and wretchedness, are not sufficient to reconcile us to the thought.



FABLE XLVIII.

The Crow and the Pitcher.

A CROW, ready to die with thirst, flew with joy to a pitcher which he beheld at some distance. When he came, he found water in it indeed, but so near the bottom, that with all his stooping and straining, he was not able to reach it. Then he endeavoured to overturn the pitcher, that so at least he might be able to get a little of it; but his strength was not sufficient for this. At last, seeing some pebbles lie near the place, he cast them one by one into the pitcher; and thus, by degrees, raised the water up to the very brim, and satisfied his thirst.

MORALS.

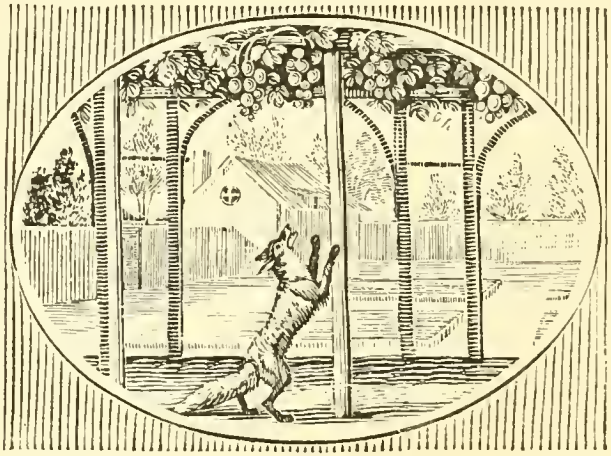
What we cannot compass by force, we may by invention and industry.

When frowning *fates thy sanguine* hopes *defeat,*
And virtuous aims with disappointment *meet,*
Submit not to despair, *th' attempt renew,*
And rise superior *to the* vulgar *crew.*

Reflection.

Many things which cannot be effected by strength, or by the old vulgar way of enterprising, may yet be brought about by some new and untried means. A man of sagacity and penetration, upon encountering a difficulty or two, does not immediately despair; but if he cannot succeed one way, employs his wit and ingenuity another; and, to avoid or get over an impediment, makes no scruple of stepping out of the path of his forefathers. Since our happiness, next to the regulation of our minds, depends altogether upon our having and enjoying the conveniences of life, why should we stand upon ceremony about the methods of obtaining them, or pay any deference to antiquity upon that score? If almost every age had not exerted itself in some new improvements of its own, we should want a thousand arts; or, at least, many degrees of perfection in every art, which at present we are in possession of. The invention of anything which is more commodious for the mind or body than what they had before, ought to be embraced readily, and the projector of it distinguished with a suitable encouragement. Such as the use of the compass, for example, from which mankind reaps so much benefit and advantage, and which was not known to former ages. When we follow the steps of those who have gone before us in the old beaten tract of life, how do we differ from horses in a team,

which are linked to each other by a chain of harness, and move on in a dull, heavy pace to the tune of their leader's bells? But the man who enriches the present fund of knowledge with some new and useful improvement, like a happy adventurer at sea, discovers, as it were, an unknown land, and imports an additional trade into his own country.



FABLE XLIX.

The Fox and the Grapes.

A FOX, very hungry, chanced to come into a Vineyard, where there hung many bunches of charming ripe grapes; but nailed up to a trellis so high, that he leaped till he quite tired himself without being able to reach one of them. At last, Let who will take them! says he; they are but green and sour; so I'll even let them alone.

MORALS.

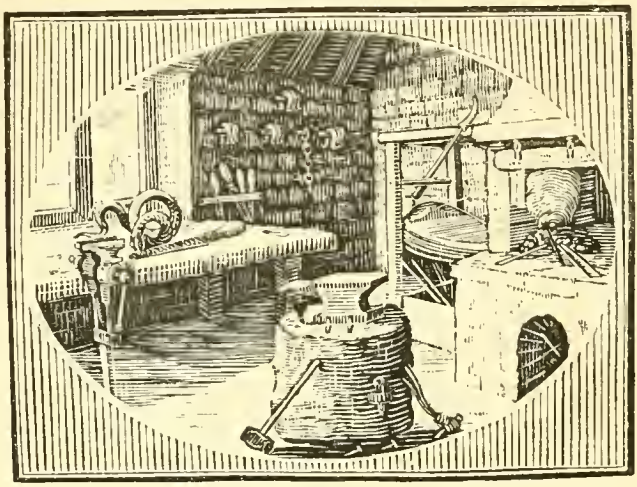
When a man finds it impossible to obtain the things he longs for, it is a mark of sound wisdom and discretion to make a virtue of necessity.

Old maids who loathe the matrimonial state,
Poor rogues who laugh to scorn the rich and great,
Patriots who rail at placemen and at pow'r,
All, like sly Reynard, *say* "The Grapes are sour."

REFLECTION.

This Fable is a good reprimand to a parcel of vain coxcombs in the world, who, because they would never be thought to be disappointed in any of their pursuits, pretend a dislike to everything which they cannot obtain. There is a strange propensity in mankind to this temper, and there are numbers of grumbling malcontents in every different faculty and sect in life. The discarded statesman, considering the corruption of the times, would not have any hand in the administration of affairs for all the world. The country squire damns a court life, and would not go cringing and creeping to a drawing-room for the best place the King has in his disposal. A young fellow, being asked how he liked a celebrated beauty, by whom all the world knew he was despised, answered, She had a stinking breath. How insufferable is the pride of this poor creature man! who would stoop to the basest, vilest actions, rather than be thought not able to do anything. For what is more base and

vile than lying? And when do we lie more notoriously, than when we disparage and find fault with a thing for no other reason but because it is out of our power.



FABLE L.

The Viper and the File.

A VIPER entering a smith's shop, looked up and down for something to eat, and seeing a File, fell to gnawing it as greedily as could be. The File told him, very gruffly, that he had best be quiet and let him alone; for that he would get very little by nibbling at one, who, upon occasion, could bite iron and steel.

MORALS.

It's the fate of envy to attack those characters that are superior to its malice.

Witlings! beware, nor wantonly provoke
Those who with int'rest may repay the joke;
Some claim our pity who fall preys to wit,
But all men triumph o'er the Biter Bit.

Reflection.

By this Fable we are cautioned to consider what any person is, before we make an attack upon him after any manner whatsoever: Particularly how we let our tongues slip in censuring the actions of those who are, in the opinion of the world, not only of an unquestioned reputation, so that nobody will believe what we insinuate against them; but of such an influence, upon account of their own veracity, that the least word from them would ruin our credit to all intents and purposes. If wit be the case, and we have a satirical vein, which at certain periods must have a flow, let us be cautious at whom we level it; for if the person's understanding be of better proof than our own, all our ingenious sallies, like liquor squirted against the wind, will recoil back upon our own faces, and make us the ridicule of every spectator. This Fable, besides, is not an improper emblem of Envy; which, rather than not bite at all, will fall foul where it can hurt nothing but itself; and such is its malignancy, that the greatest wits and brightest characters in all ages have ever been the objects of its attack. Ought we not, then, to guard against the admission of an inmate that not only attempts to injure the virtuous part of mankind, but also effectually ruins the peace of its possessor?

FABLE LI.

The Mountains in Labour.

THE Mountains were said to be in labour, and uttered most dreadful groans. People came together, far and near, to see what birth would be produced; and after they had waited a considerable time in expectation, out crept a mouse.

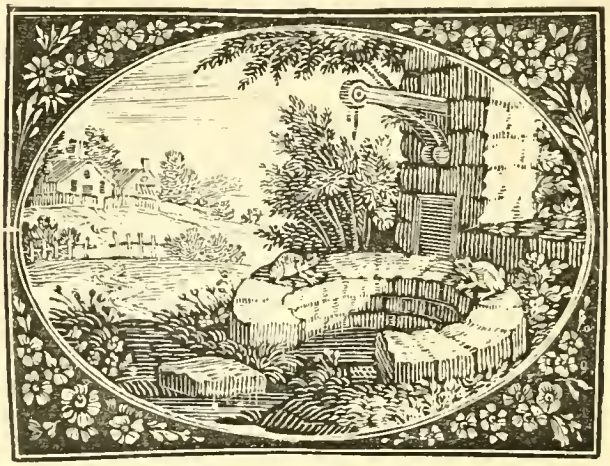
MORALS.

To raise uncommon expectations renders an ordinary event ridiculous.

Thus the vain Alchymist, in promise bold,
Beholds projection big with MINES *of* GOLD:
But now, his glasses burst, he thinks him rich
To save a little oil to cure the itch.

REFLECTION.

Great cry and little wool, is the *English* proverb; the sense of which bears an exact proportion to this Fable. By which are exposed, all those who promise something exceeding great, but come off with a production ridiculously little. Projectors of all kinds, who endeavour by artificial rumours to raise the expectations of mankind, and then by their mean performances defeat and disappoint them, have, time out of mind, been lashed with the recital of this Fable. How agreeably surprising is it to see an unpromising favourite, whom the caprice of fortune has placed at the helm of state, serving the commonwealth with justice and integrity, instead of smothering and embezzling the public treasure to his own private and wicked ends! And on the contrary, how melancholy, how dreadful! or rather, how exasperating and provoking a sight is it to behold one, whose constant declarations for liberty and the public good have raised people's expectations of him to the highest pitch, as soon as he is got into power exerting his whole art and cunning to ruin and enslave his country! The sanguine hopes of all those that wished well to virtue, and flattered themselves with a reformation of everything that opposed the well-being of the community, vanish away in smoke, and are lost in a dark, gloomy, uncomfortable prospect.



FABLE LII.

The Two Frogs.

ONE hot sultry summer, the lakes and ponds being almost everywhere dried up, a couple of Frogs agreed to travel together in search of water. At last they came to a deep well, and sitting upon the brink of it, began to consult, whether they should leap in or no. One of them was for it; urging, that there was plenty of clear spring water, and no danger of being disturbed. Well, says t'other, all this may be true; and yet I can't come into your opinion for my life: For, if the water should happen to dry up here too, how should we get out again?

MORALS.

We ought never to change our situation in life, without duly considering the consequences of such a change.

On things of moment *with thyself debate,*
Nor, inconsiderate, change *thy present state,*
Nor on the specious good *lay too much stress,*
Lest greater *Ills incur, in shunning* less.

REFLECTION.

The moral of this Fable is intended to put us in mind *to look before we leap.* That we should not undertake any action of importance, without considering first, what the event of it is like to prove, and how we shall be able to come off, upon such and such provisos. A good General does not think he diminishes anything of his character when he looks forward, beyond the main action, and concerts measures, in case there should be occasion, for a safe retreat.

How many unfortunate matches are struck up every day for want of this wholesome consideration? Profuse living, and extravagant gaming, both which terminate in the ruin of those that follow them, are mostly owing to a neglect of this precaution. Wicked counsellors advise, and ignorant princes execute those things, which afterwards they often dearly repent. Wars are begun by this blind stupidity, from which a state is not able to extricate itself with either honour or safety; and projects are encouraged by the rash accession of those, who never considered how they were to get out, till they had plunged themselves irrecoverably into them.

FABLE LIII.

The Thief and the Dog.

A THIEF coming to rob a certain house in the night, was disturbed in his attempts by a fierce vigilant dog who kept barking at him continually. Upon which the thief, thinking to stop his mouth, threw him a piece of bread: But the dog refused it with indignation; telling him, that before, he only suspected him to be a bad man; but now, upon his offering to bribe him, he was confirmed in his opinion; and that, as he was entrusted with the guardianship of his master's house, he should never cease barking while such a rogue as he lay lurking about it.

MORALS.

Nothing can alter the honest purposes of the man, who despises an insidious bribe; and whose mind is proof against temptation.

Faithful *to* man, *and to thy conscience* just,
Spurn *him who* tempts *thee to* betray *thy trust.*
An honest mind 's *the choicest gift of* heav'n,
How blest *to whom th'* etherial spark *is given!*

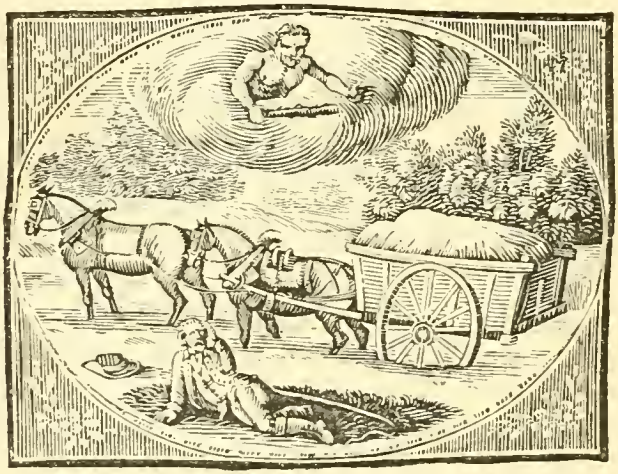
REFLECTION.

A man who is very free in his protestations of friendship, or offers of great civility, upon the first interview may meet with applause and esteem from fools, but contrives his schemes of that sort to little or no purpose, in the company of men of sense.

It is a common and known maxim, to suspect an enemy, even the more, for his endeavouring to convince us of his benevolence; because the oddness of the thing puts us upon our guard, and makes us conclude, that some pernicious design must be couched under so sudden and unexpected a turn of behaviour: But it is no unnecessary caution to be upon the watch against even indifferent people, when we perceive them uncommonly forward in their approaches of civility and kindness. The man, who at first sight makes us an offer, which is due only to particular and well-acquainted friends, must be either a knave, and intends by such a bait to draw us into his net; or a fool, with whom we ought to avoid having any communication.

Thus far the consideration of this Fable may be

useful to us in private life; what it contains farther, in relation to the public, is, That a man, truly honest, will never let his mouth be stopped with a bribe; but the greater the offer is which is designed to buy his silence, the louder and more constantly will he open against the miscreants who would practise it upon him.



FABLE LIV.

Hercules and the Carter.

AS a clownish fellow was driving his Cart along a deep miry lane, the wheels stuck so fast in the clay, that the horses could not draw them out. Upon this, he fell a bawling and praying to *Hercules* to come and help him. *Hercules* looking down from a cloud, bid him not lie there, like an idle rascal as he was, but get up and whip his horses stoutly, and clap his

shoulder to the wheel, adding, That this was the only way for him to obtain his assistance.

MORALS.

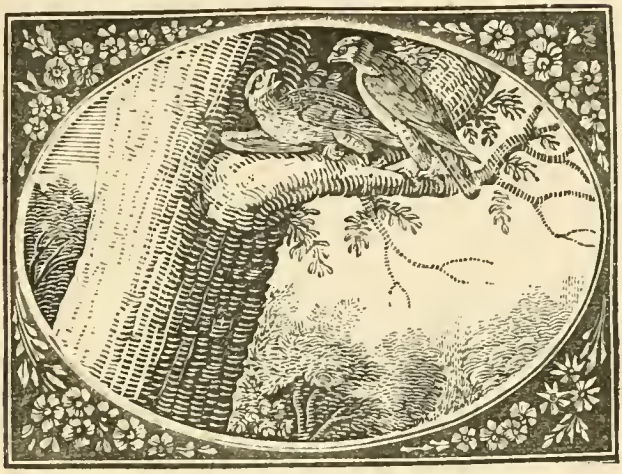
Prayers and wishes amount to nothing: We must put forth our own honest endeavours to obtain success on the assistance of heaven.

Inactive wishes are but waste of time,
And, without efforts, pray'rs themselves a crime:
Vain are their hopes who miracles expect,
And ask from heaven what themselves neglect.

REFLECTION.

This Fable shews us how vain and ill-grounded the expectations of those people are, who imagine they can obtain whatever they want by importuning heaven with their prayers; for it is so agreeable to the nature of the Divine Being, to be better pleased with virtuous actions and an honest industry, than idle Prayers, that it is a sort of blasphemy to say otherwise. These were the sentiments of honest good heathens, who were strangers to all revealed religion: But it is not strange that they should embrace and propagate such a notion, since it is no other than the dictate of common reason. What is both strange in itself, and surprising how it could be made so fashionable, is, that most of those whose reason should be enlightened by Revelation, are very apt to be guilty of this stupidity, and, by praying often for the comforts of life, to neglect that business which is the proper means of procuring them. How such a mistaken devotion came to prevail, one cannot imagine,

unless from one of these two motives; either that people, by such a veil of hypocrisy, would pass themselves upon mankind for better than they really are; or are influenced by unskilful preachers (which is sometimes, indeed too often, the case) to mind the world as little as possible, even to the neglect of their necessary callings. No question but it is a great sin for a man to fail in his trade or occupation, by running often to prayers: it being a demonstration in itself, though the Scripture had never said it, that we please God most, when we are doing the most good: And how can we do more good, than by a sober honest industry, *to provide for those of our own household,* and to endeavour *to have to give to him that needeth.* The man who is virtuously and honestly engaged, is actually serving God all the while, and is more likely to have his silent wishes, accompanied with strenuous endeavours, complied with by the Supreme Being, than he who begs with a fruitless vehemence, and solicits with an empty hand: A hand which would be more religious were it usefully employed, and more devout, were it stretched forth to do good to those that want it.



Fable LV.

The Sick Kite.

A KITE had been sick a long time; and finding there were no hopes of recovery, begged of his mother to go to all the churches and religious houses in the country, to try what prayers and promises would effect in his behalf. The old Kite replied: Indeed, dear Son, I would willingly undertake anything to save your life, but I have great reason to despair of doing you any service in the way you propose: For, with what face can I ask anything of the Gods in favour of one whose whole life has been a continued scene of rapine and injustice, and who has not scrupled upon occasion to rob the very altars themselves?

MORALS.

After a long life spent in acts of impiety and wickedness, we may justly suspect the sincerity of a death-bed repentance.

Thus early sinning, and repenting late,
The dying debauchee would bribe his fate;
Pray'rs, alms, and promises he tries in vain,
Not sick of follies past, but present pain.

REFLECTION.

The rehearsal of this Fable almost unavoidably draws our attention to that very serious and important point, the consideration of a death-bed repentance. And, to expose the absurdity of relying upon such a weak foundation, we need only ask the same question with the Kite in the Fable: How can he, that has offended the Gods all his life-time by doing acts of dishonour and injustice, expect that they should be pleased with him at last, for no other reason but because he fears he shall not be able to offend them any longer; when, in truth, such a repentance can signify nothing, but a confirmation of his former impudence and folly? For sure no stupidity can exceed that of the man who expects a future judgment, and yet can bear to commit any piece of injustice, with a sense and deliberation of the fact.

Fable LVI.

The Two Pots.

AN earthen pot and one of brass, standing together upon the river's brink, were both carried away by the flowing in of the tide. The earthen pot showed some uneasiness, as fearing he should be broken; but his companion of brass bid him be under no apprehensions, for that he would take care of him. Oh! replies the other, keep as far off as ever you can, I entreat you; it is you I am most afraid of: For, whether the stream dashes you against me, or me against you, I am sure to be the sufferer; and therefore, I beg of you, do not let us come near one another.

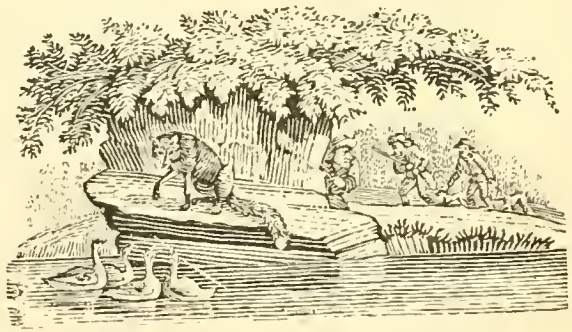
MORALS.

Reciprocal pleasure and advantage is the only rational foundation for real friendship.

Born to the comforts of an humble state,
Fly their embrace, if courted by the great,
Happy to learn, how ill you can afford
The vast expense of how-d'yes from my lord.

Reflection.

A man of a moderate fortune, who is contented with what he has, and finds he can live happily upon it, should take care not to hazard and expose his felicity by consorting with the great and the powerful. People of equal conditions may float down the current of life without hurting each other; but it is a point of some difficulty to steer one's course in the company of the great, so as to escape without a bulge. One would not choose to have one's little country-box situated in the neighbourhood of a very great man; for whether I ignorantly trespass upon him, or he knowingly encroaches upon me, I only am like to be the sufferer. I can neither entertain nor play with him upon his own terms; for that which is moderation and diversion to him, in me would be extravagance and ruin.



Fable LVII.

The Sparrow and the Hare.

A HARE, being seized by an Eagle, squeaked out in a most woful manner. A Sparrow that sat upon a tree just by and saw it, could not forbear being unseasonably witty, but called out, and said to the Hare: So ho! what! sit there and be killed? Pr'ythee, up and away; I dare say, if you would but try, so swift a creature as you are would easily escape from the Eagle. As he was going on with his cruel raillery, down came a Hawk, and snapt him up; and, notwithstanding his vain cries and lamentations, fell a devouring of him in an instant. The Hare, who was just expiring, yet received comfort from this accident, even in the agonies of death; and, addressing her last words to the Sparrow, said: You, who just now insulted my misfortune with so much secur-

ity, as you thought, may please to shew us how well you can bear the like, now it has befallen you.

MORALS.

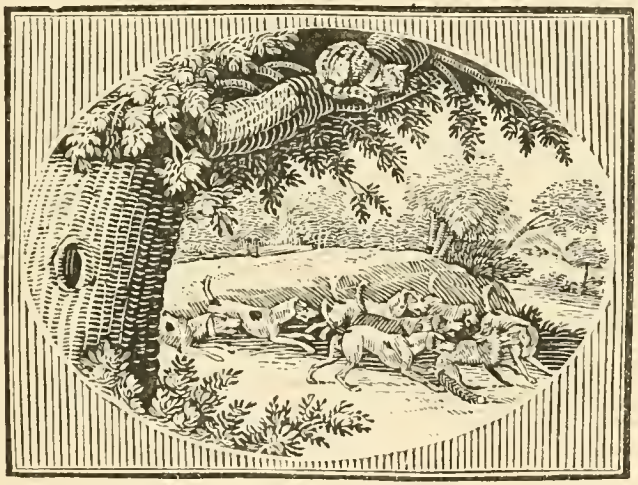
The mutability of human affairs is such, that no situation, however seemingly advantageous, ought to make us jest with the misfortunes of others.

Tradesman, insult not, if a neighbour fail,
Lest, by and by, yourself should go to jail;
Nor, if a damsel slip, Prude, shake your head,
Lest you yourself next month be brought to bed.

REFLECTION.

Nothing is more impertinent than for people to be giving their opinion and advice in cases in which, were they to be their own, themselves would be as much at a loss what to do. But so great an itch have most men to be directors in the affairs of others, either to shew the superiority of their understanding, or their own security and exemption from the ills they would have removed, that they forwardly and conceitedly obtrude their counsel, even at the hazard of their own safety and reputation. There have been instances of those who, either officiously or for the jest's sake, have spent much of their time in reading lectures of economy to the rest of the world, when at the same time their own ill husbandry has been such, that they were forced to quit their dwelling and take lodgings, while their goods were sold to make a composition for the debts which they owed to petty tradesmen.

Without giving more examples of this kind, of which every one may furnish himself with enough from his own observation, we cannot but conclude that none are greater objects of ridicule than they who thus merrily assume a character which, at the same time, by some incidents of their life, they convince us of their being so unfit for.



FABLE LVIII.

The Cat and the Fox.

AS the Cat and the Fox were talking politics together, on a time, in the middle of the forest, *Reynard* said, Let things turn out ever so bad, he did not care, for he had a thousand tricks for them yet before they should hurt him. But pray, says he, Mrs Puss, suppose there should be an invasion, what course do you design to take? Nay, says the Cat,

I have but one shift for it; and if that won't do, I am undone. I am sorry for you, replies *Reynard*, with all my heart, and would gladly furnish you with one or two of mine, but indeed, neighbour, as times go, it is not good to trust; we must even be every one for himself, as the saying is, and so your humble servant. These words were scarce out of his mouth, when they were alarmed with a pack of hounds that came upon them full cry. The Cat, by the help of her single shift, ran up a tree, and sat securely among the top branches; from whence she beheld *Reynard*, who had not been able to get out of sight, overtaken with his thousand tricks, and torn in as many pieces by the dogs which had surrounded him.

MORALS.

Successful cunning often makes an ostentatious pretension to wisdom.

The sly politician may boast of his arts,
How his budget is full, and by cunning he's guided;
But the wise and the wary, less proud of his parts,
With a single expedient is better provided.

REFLECTION.

A man that sets up for more cunning than the rest of his neighbours, is generally a silly fellow at the bottom. Whoever is master of a little judgment and insight into things, let him keep them to himself and make use of them as he sees occasion; but he should

not be teasing others with an idle and impertinent ostentation of them. One good discreet expedient made use of upon an emergency, will do a man more real service, and make others think better of him, than to have passed all along for a shrewd, crafty knave, and be bubbled at last. When any one has been such a coxcomb as to insult his acquaintance, by pretending to more policy and stratagem than the rest of mankind, they are apt to wish for some difficulty for him to shew his skill in ; where, if he should miscarry (as ten to one but he does), his misfortune, instead of pity, is sure to be attended with laughter. He that sets up for a biter, as the phrase is, being generally intent upon his prey, or vain of shewing his art, frequently exposes himself to the traps of one sharper than himself, and incurs the ridicule of those whom he designed to make ridiculous.

FABLE LIX.

The Old Hound.

AN old Hound, who had been an excellent good one in his time, and given his master great sport and satisfaction in many a chase, at last, by the effect of years, became feeble and unserviceable. However, being in the field one day, when the Stag was almost run down, he happened to be the first that came in with him, and seized him by one of his haunches; but, his decayed and broken teeth not being able to keep their hold, the Deer escaped, and threw him quite out. Upon which, his master, being in a great passion, was going to strike him, when the honest old creature is said to have barked out his apology: Ah! do not strike your poor old servant; it is not my heart and inclination, but my strength and speed that fail me. If what I now am displeases, pray don't forget what I have been.

MORALS.

Useful services, performed in youth, ought not to be cancelled by old age and infirmities.

Oh let not those whom honest servants bless,
With cruel hand their age infirm oppress;
Forget their service past, their former truth,
And all the cares and labours of their youth.

REFLECTION.

This Fable may serve to give us a general view of the ingratitude of the greatest part of mankind. Notwithstanding all the civility and complaisance that is used among people where there is a common intercourse of business, yet, let the main spring, the probability of their being serviceable to each other, either in point of pleasure or profit, be but once broken, and farewell courtesy. So far from continuing any regard in behalf of past favours, that it is very well if they forbear doing anything that is injurious. If the master had only ceased to caress and make much of the old Hound when he was past doing any service, it had not been very strange; but to treat a poor creature ill, not for a failure of inclination, but merely a defect of nature, must, notwithstanding the crowd of examples there are to countenance it, be pronounced inhuman and unreasonable.

There are two accounts upon which people that have been useful are frequently neglected. One, when they are so decayed, either through age or some accident, that they are no longer equal to the services they have formerly done; the other, when

the occasion or emergency which required such talents no longer exists. *Phædrus*, who more than once complains of the bad consequences of age, makes no other application to this Fable, than by telling his friend *Philetus*, with some regret, that he wrote it with such a view; having, it seems, been repaid with neglect, or worse usage, for services done in his youth to those who were then able to afford him a better recompense.

FABLE LX.

Two Young Men and the Cook.

TWO young men went into a cook's shop, under pretence of buying meat; and while the cook's back was turned, one of them snatched up a piece of beef, and gave it to his companion, who presently clapt it under his cloak. The cook turning about again, and missing his beef, began to charge them

with it; upon which, he that first took it swore bitterly he had none of it. He that had it swore as heartily, that he had taken up none of his meat. Why look ye, gentlemen, says the cook, I see your equivocation; and though I can't tell which of you has taken my meat, I am sure, between you both, there's a thief, and a couple of rascals.

MORALS.

Evading the truth is just as blameable as denying it.

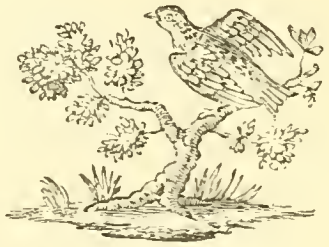
Thus quibbling thieves evade the charge,
Offend the laws, and go at large:
But though 'tis hard the crime to fix,
We know they're guilty by their tricks.

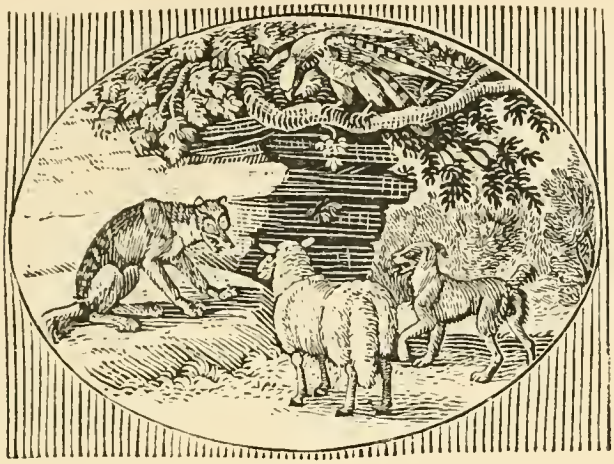
REFLECTION.

An honest man's word is as good as his oath; and so is a rogue's too; for he that will cheat and lie, why should he scruple to forswear himself? Is the latter more criminal than either of the former? An honest man needs no oath to oblige him; and a rogue only deceives you the more certainly by it, because you think you have tied him up, and he is sure you have not. In truth, it is not easy, with the eye of reason, to discern, that there is any good in swearing at all. We need not scruple to take an honest man's bare asseveration; and we shall do wrong if we believe a rogue, though he swears by the most solemn oaths that can be invented.

There are, besides, a sort of people who are rogues, and yet don't know that they are such; who, when they have taken an oath, make a scruple of breaking

it, but rack their invention to evade it by some equivocation or other; by which, if they can but satisfy their acquaintance, and serve their own scheme they think all is well, and never once consider the black and heinous guilt which must attend such a behaviour. They solemnly call the supreme Being to witness; to what? to a sham, an evasion, a lie. Thus these unthinking, prevaricating wretches, at the same time that they believe there is a God, act as if there were none; or, which is worse, dare affront him in the highest degree. They who by swearing would clear themselves of a crime, of which they are really guilty, need not be at much pains about wording their oath; for, express themselves how they will, they are sure to be forsworn.





FABLE LXI.

The Dog and the Sheep.

THE Dog sued the Sheep for a debt, of which the Kite and the Wolf were to be judges. They, without debating long upon the matter, or making any scruple for want of evidence, gave sentence for the plaintiff; who immediately tore the poor Sheep in pieces, and divided the spoil with the unjust judges.

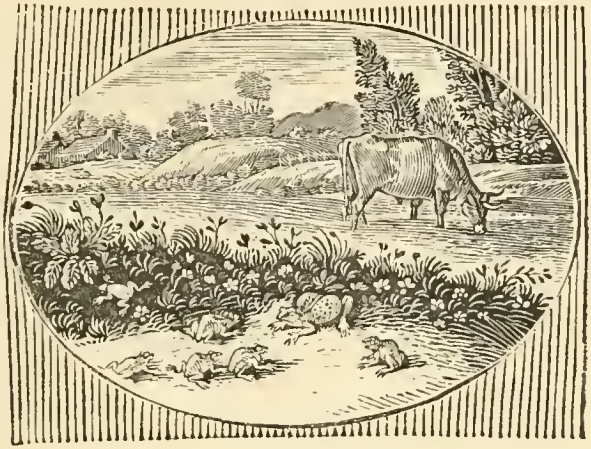
MORALS.

We cannot reasonably hope for justice in a court, where the judges are interested in the decision.

Whose life is safe, if tried before a judge,
That to the hapless pris'ner bears a grudge?
Whose property secur'd from lawless fury,
If any private int'rest warps the jury?

Reflection.

Deplorable are the times, when open bare-faced villany is protected and encouraged, when innocence is obnoxious, honesty contemptible, and it is reckoned criminal to espouse the cause of virtue. Men originally entered into covenants and simple compacts with each other for the promotion of their happiness and well-being, for the establishment of justice and public peace. How comes it then that they look stupidly on, and tamely acquiesce, when wicked men pervert this end, and establish an arbitrary tyranny of their own upon the foundation of fraud and oppression? Among beasts, who are incapable of being civilised by social laws, it is no strange thing to see innocent helpless sheep fall a prey to dogs, wolves, and kites: But it is amazing how mankind could ever sink down to such a low degree of base cowardice, as to suffer some of the worst of their species to usurp a power over them, to supersede the righteous laws of good government, and to exercise all kinds of injustice and hardship in gratifying their own vicious lusts. Wherever such enormities are practised, it is when a few rapacious statesmen combine together, to get and secure the power in their own hands, and agree to divide the spoils among themselves. For as long as the cause is to be tried only among themselves, no question but they will always vouch for each other. But, at the same time, it is hard to determine which resemble brutes most, they in acting, or the people in suffering them to act their vile selfish schemes.



Fable LXII.

The Proud Frog.

AN Ox, grazing in a meadow, chanced to set his foot among a parcel of young frogs, and trod one of them to death. The rest informed their mother, when she came home, what had happened; telling her, that the beast which did it was the hugest creature that ever they saw in their lives. What, was it so big? says the old Frog, swelling and blowing up her speckled belly to a great degree. Oh, bigger by a vast deal, say they. And so big? says she, straining herself yet more. Indeed, Mamma, say they, if you were to burst yourself, you would never be so big. She strove yet again, and burst herself indeed.

MORALS.

The silly ambition of vying with our superiors, in station and fortune, is the direct road to ruin.

Ye cits! of narrow means and small estate,
View not with envy the luxurious great:
Think that from riot bankruptcies will come,
And mark your prudent neighbour worth a plum.

Reflection.

Whenever a man endeavours to live equal with one of a greater fortune than himself, he is sure to share a like fate with the Frog in the Fable. How many vain people of moderate easy circumstances burst and come to nothing, by vying with those whose estates are more ample than their own! Sir *Changeling Plumbstock* was possessed of a very considerable demesne, devolved to him by the death of an old uncle of the city, who had adopted him his heir. He had a false taste of happiness; and, without the least economy, trusting to the sufficiency of his vast revenue, was resolved to be outdone by nobody, in shewish grandeur and expensive living. He gave five thousand pounds for a piece of ground in the country, to set a house upon, the building and furniture of which cost fifty thousand more; and his gardens were proportionably magnificent. Besides which, he thought himself under a necessity of buying out two or three tenements which stood in his neighbourhood, that he might have elbow room enough. All this he could very well bear; and still might have been happy, had it not been for an unfortunate view which he one day happened to take of my Lord *Castlebuilder's* gardens, which consist of twenty acres, whereas his own were not above twelve. For from that time he grew pensive; and before the ensuing winter, gave five and thirty years' purchase

for a dozen acres more to enlarge his gardens, built a couple of exorbitant greenhouses and a large pavilion at the farther end of a terrace walk, the bare repairs and superintendencies of all which call for the remaining part of his income. He is mortgaged pretty deep, and pays nobody; but, being a privileged person, resides altogether at a private cheap lodging in the city of *Westminster*.

FABLE LXIII.

The Dove and the Bee.

THE Bee, compelled by thirst, went to drink in a clear purling rivulet; but the current, with its circling eddy, snatched her away, and carried her down the stream. A Dove, pitying her distressed condition, cropt a branch from a neighbouring tree, and let it fall into the water, by means of which the Bee saved herself, and got ashore. Not long after, a Fowler, having a design upon the Dove, planted his nets and all his little artillery in due order, without the Bird's observing what he was about; which the Bee perceiving, just as he was going to put his design in execution she bit him by the heel, and made him give so sudden a start, that the Dove took the alarm, and flew away.

MORALS.

Charity will have its rewards one time or other; for certain in the promised recompense hereafter, perhaps in a grateful return here.

Hail gratitude! the spark whence virtue springs,
And adoration to the King of kings;
The greatest bliss the feeling bosom knows,
The source whence every gen'rous action flows.

REFLECTION.

One good turn deserves another; and gratitude is excited by so noble and natural a spirit, that he ought to be looked upon as the vilest of creatures, who has no sense of it. It is, indeed, so very just and equitable a thing, and so much every man's duty, that to speak of it properly one should not mention it as anything meritorious, or that may claim praise and admiration, any more than we should say a man ought to be rewarded or commended for not killing his father, or forbearing to set fire to his neighbour's house. The bright and shining piece of morality, therefore, which is recommended to us in this Fable, is set forth in this example of the Dove, who, without any obligation or expectation, does a voluntary office of charity to its fellow-creature in distress. The constant uninterrupted practice of this virtue is the only thing in which we are capable of imitating the great Author of our being, whose *Beloved Son,* besides the many precepts He has given to enforce this duty, used this expression as a common saying, *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

FABLE LXIV.

The Collier and the Fuller.

THE Collier and the Fuller, being old acquaintance, happened upon a time to meet together; and the latter, being but ill provided with a habitation, was invited by the former to come and live in the same house with him. I thank you, my dear friend, replies the Fuller, for your kind offer, but it cannot be; for if I were to dwell with you, whatever I should take pains to scour and make clean in the morning, the dust of you and your coals would blacken and defile, as bad as ever, before night.

MORALS.

We commonly imbibe the principles and manners of those with whom we associate.

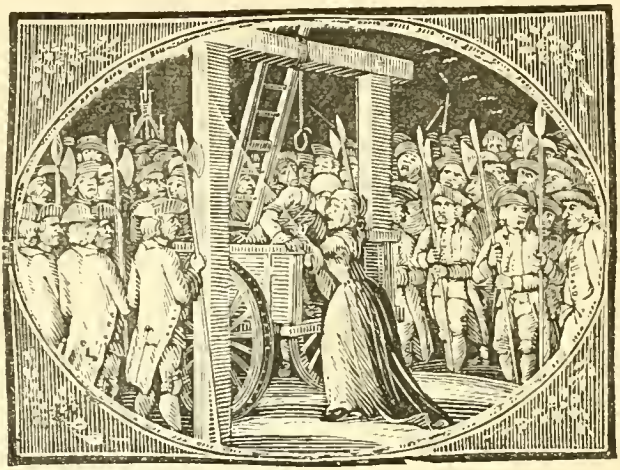
With vice allied, however pure,
No virtue can be long secure:
Shun then the traitress and her wiles,
Whate'er she touches she defiles.

REFLECTION.

It is of no small importance in life, to be cautious what company we keep, and with whom we enter into friendships. For though we are ever so well disposed ourselves, and happen to be ever so free from vice and debauchery, yet, if those with whom we frequently converse are engaged in a lewd, wicked course, it will be almost impossible for us to escape being drawn in with them.

If we are truly wise, and would shun those *siren* rocks of pleasure upon which so many have split before us, we should forbid ourselves all manner of commerce and correspondence with those who are steering a course which, reason tells us, is not only not for our advantage, but must end in our destruction.

All the virtue we can boast of will not be sufficient to ensure us, if we embark in bad company. For though our philosophy were such, as that we could preserve ourselves from being tainted and infected with their manners, yet their character would twist and entwine itself along with ours in so intricate a fold, that the world would not take the trouble to unravel and separate them. Reputations are of a subtle insinuating texture like water; that which is derived from the clearest spring, if it chances to mix with a foul current, runs on, undistinguished, in one muddy stream for the future, and must for ever partake of the colour and condition of its associate.



FABLE LXV.

The Boy and his Mother.

A LITTLE Boy, who went to school, stole one of his school-fellow's horn-books, and brought it home to his mother; who was so far from correcting and discouraging him upon account of the theft, that she commended and gave him an apple for his pains. In process of time, as the child grew up to be a man, he accustomed himself to greater robberies; and at last, being apprehended and committed to gaol, he was tried and condemned for a felony. On the day of his execution, as the officers were conducting him to the gallows, he was attended by a vast crowd of people, and among the rest by his mother, who came sighing and sobbing along, and deploring extremely her son's unhappy fate; which the criminal observing,

he called to the sheriff, and begged the favour of him, that he would give him leave to speak a word or two to his poor afflicted mother. The sheriff (as who would deny a dying man so reasonable a request) gave him permission; and the felon, while every one thought he was whispering something of importance to his mother, bit off her ear, to the great offence and surprise of the whole assembly. What, say they, was not this villain contented with the impious acts which he has already committed, but he must increase the number of them, by doing this violence to his mother? Good people, replied he, I would not have you be under a mistake; that wicked woman deserves this, and even worse at my hands; for if she had chastised and chid, instead of rewarding and caressing me, when in my infancy I stole the horn-book from the school, I had not come to this ignominious untimely end.

MORALS.

Youthful minds, like the pliant wax, are susceptible of the most lasting impressions, and the good or evil bias they then receive is seldom or ever eradicated.

Fathers and mothers! train your children's youth
To virtue, honour, honesty, and truth;
Dreadful! to bring about your child's damnation,
And give your sons a Tyburn *education.*

REFLECTION.

Notwithstanding the great innate depravity of mankind, one need not scruple to affirm, that most of the

wickedness, which is so frequent and so pernicious in the world, arises from a bad education; and that the child is obliged either to the example or connivance of its parents, for most of the vicious habits which it wears through the course of its future life. The mind of one that is young is, like wax, soft and capable of any impression which is given it; but it is hardened by time, and the first signature grows so firm and durable, that scarce any pains or application can erase it. It is a mistaken notion in people, when they imagine that there is no occasion for regulating or restraining the actions of very young children, which though allowed to be sometimes very naughty in those of a more advanced age, are in them, they suppose, altogether innocent and inoffensive. But, however innocent they may be, as to their intention then, yet, as the practice may grow upon them unobserved, and root itself into a habit, they ought to be checked and discountenanced in their first efforts towards anything that is injurious or dishonest; that the love of virtue and the abhorrence of wrong and oppression may be let into their minds, at the same time that they receive the very first dawn of understanding, and glimmering of reason. Whatever guilt arises from the actions of one whose education has been deficient as to this point, no question but a just share of it will be laid, by the great Judge of the world, to the charge of those who were, or should have been, his instructors.

Fable LXVI.

The Wanton Calf.

A CALF, full of play and wantonness, seeing the Ox at plough, could not forbear insulting him. What a sorry poor drudge art thou, says he, to bear that heavy yoke upon your neck, and go all day drawing a plough at your tail, to turn up the ground for your master! But you are a wretched dull slave, and know no better, or else you would not do it. See what a happy life I lead; I go just where I please; sometimes I lie down under the cool shade; sometimes frisk about in the open sunshine; and, when I please, slake my thirst in the clear sweet brook: But you, if you were to perish, have not so much as a little dirty water to refresh you. The Ox, not at all

moved with what he said, went quietly and calmly on with his work: and, in the evening, was unyoked and turned loose. Soon after which he saw the Calf taken out of the field, and delivered into the hands of a priest, who immediately led him to the altar, and prepared to sacrifice him. His head was hung round with fillets of flowers, and the fatal knife was just going to be applied to his throat, when the Ox drew near and whispered him to this purpose: Behold the end of your insolence and arrogance; it was for this only you were suffered to live at all; and pray now, friend, whose condition is best, yours or mine?

MORALS.

To insult people in distress is the property of a cruel, indiscreet, and giddy temper; for on the next turn of fortune's wheel, we may be thrown down to their condition, and they exalted to ours.

Thus oft the industrious poor endures reproach
From rogues in lace, and sharpers in a coach;
But soon to Tyburn *sees the villains led,*
While he still earns in peace his daily bread.

REFLECTION.

We may learn by this Fable the consequence of an idle life, and how well satisfied laborious, diligent men are, in the end, when they come quietly to enjoy the fruits of their industry. They who, by little tricks and sharpings, or by open violence and robbery, live in a high extensive way, often, in their hearts at

least, despise the poor honest man, who is contented with the virtuous product of his daily labour, and patiently submits to his destiny. But how often is the poor man comforted, by seeing these wanton villains led in triumph to the altar of justice, while he has many a cheerful summer's morning to enjoy abroad, and many a long winter's evening to indulge himself in at home, by a quiet hearth, and under an unenvied roof: Blessings, which often attend a sober, industrious man, though the idle and the profligate are utter strangers to them.

Luxury and intemperance, besides their being certain to shorten a man's days, are very apt not only to engage people with their seeming charms into a debauched life, utterly prejudicial to their health, but to make them have a contempt for others, whose good sense and true taste of happiness inspire them with an aversion to idleness and effeminacy, and put them upon hardening their constitution by innocent exercise and laudable employment. How many do gluttony and sloth tumble into an untimely grave! while the temperate and the active drink sober draughts of life, and spin out their thread to the most desirable length.

FABLE LXVII.

Jupiter and the Herdsman.

A HERDSMAN, missing a young heifer that belonged to his herd, went up and down the forest to seek it. And having walked a great deal of ground to no purpose, he fell a praying to *Jupiter* for relief; promising to sacrifice a Kid to him, if he would help him to a discovery of the thief. After this, he went on a little farther, and came near a grove of oaks, where he found the carcase of his heifer, and a lion grumbling over it, and feeding upon it. This sight almost scared him out of his wits; so down he fell upon his knees once more, and addressing himself to *Jupiter;* O *Jupiter!* says he, I promised thee a Kid to show me the thief, but now I promise thee a bull, if thou wilt be so merciful as to deliver me out of his clutches.

MORALS.

We ought never to supplicate the Divine power, but through motives of religion and virtue; prayers, dictated by passion or interest, are unacceptable to the Deity.

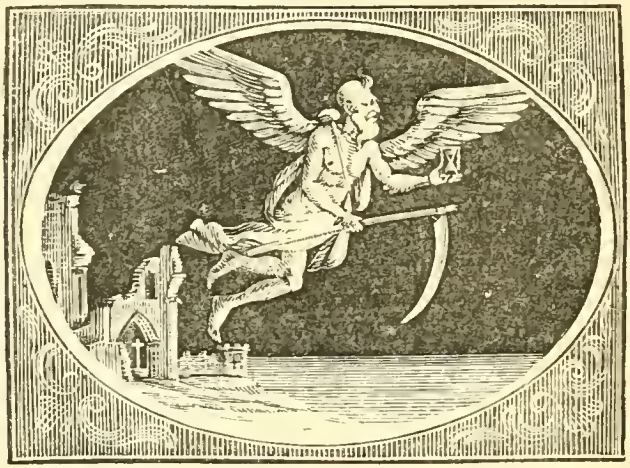
Short-sighted wretch! endure thy care,
Nor heave th' impatient sigh:
Heav'n hears thee, but perhaps thy pray'r
'Tis mercy to deny.

REFLECTION.

How ignorant and stupid are some people, who form their notions of the Supreme Being from their own poor shallow conceptions; and then, like froward children with their nurses, think it consistent with infinite wisdom and unerring justice to comply with all their whimsical petitions. Let men but live as justly as they can, and just Providence will give them what they ought to have. Of all the involuntary sins which men commit, scarce any are more frequent, than that of their praying absurdly and improperly, as well as unseasonably, when their time might have been employed so much better. The many private collections, sold up and down the nation, do not a little contribute to this injudicious practice: Which is the more to be condemned, in that we have so incomparable a public liturgy; one single address whereof (except the Lord's Prayer) may be pronounced to be the best that ever was compiled; and alone preferable to all the various manuals of occasional devotion, which are vended by hawkers and pedlars about our streets. It is as follows:—

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who

knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking; we beseech thee to have compassion upon our infirmities; and those things, which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of thy Son Jesus Christ *our Lord.*



FABLE LXVIII.

There's no To-morrow.

A MAN, who had lived a very profligate life, at length being awakened by the lively representations of a sober friend on the apprehensions of a feverish indisposition, promised that he would heartily set about his reformation, and that To-morrow he would seriously begin it. But the symptoms going off, and that To-morrow coming, he still put it off till the next, and so he went on from one To-morrow to another; but still he continued his

reprobate life. This his friend observing, said to him, I am very much concerned to find how little effect my disinterested advice has upon you: But, my friend, let me tell you, that since your To-morrow never comes, nor do you seem to intend it shall, I will believe you no more, except you set about your repentance and amendment this very moment: for, to say nothing of your repeated broken promises, you must consider, that the time that is past is no more; that To-morrow is *not* OURS; and the *present* NOW is all we have to boast off.

MORALS.

That compunction of heart cannot be sincere, which takes not immediate effect, and can be put off till To-morrow. The friend's closing observation in the Fable is so good a moral, that we need add nothing to it.

Eager *to mend, and* brookless *of delay,*
Sincere *repentance waits no* future *day;*
The present *moment only* is *allow'd;*
Uncertain *hopes and fears* to-morrow *shroud.*

REFLECTION.

Whoever considers this emblem, will find it to be his own case; we promise, and we put off, and we sin, and go on sinning: but still, as our conscience checks us for it, we take up faint purposes, and half resolutions, to do so no more, and to lead a new life for the future. Thus, with the young fellow here, we indulge ourselves in our pleasures from time to time; and when we have trifled away our lives, day after day, from one To-morrow to another, that same To-morrow

never comes. This is the sluggard's plea and practice; the libertine's, the miser's; and in short, whose is it not? Now, if we would but consider the vanity and vexation of a lewd course of life; the impiety first of entering into vows, which we intend beforehand not to perform, and afterward of breaking them; the folly and the presumption of undertaking anything that is wholly out of our power; the necessity of improving every moment of our lives; the desperate and the irreparable hazard of loosing opportunities; we should not venture body and soul upon the necessity of a procrastinated repentance, and postpone the most certain duties of a man, and of a Christian; for there is no To-morrow, nor anything, in truth, but the present instant, that we can call our own.

Part III.

FABLES, *in Verse.*

—o—

Fable I.

The Cuckoo Traveller.

A CUCKOO once, as Cuckoos use,
Who 'd been upon a winter's cruise,
Return'd with the returning spring—
Some hundred brothers of the wing,
Curious to hear from foreign realms,
Got round him in a tuft of elms.
He shook his pinions, struck his beak,
Attempted twice or thrice to speak ;

At length, up-rising on his stand,

"Old England! Well, the land's a land!
But rat me, gentlemen," says he,
"We passage-fowl that cross the sea
Have vast advantages o'er you;
Whose native woods are all you view.
The season past, I took a jaunt
Among the isles of the Levant;
Where, by the way, I stuff'd my guts
With almonds and pistachio nuts.
'Twas then my whim some weeks to be
In that choice garden, Italy:
But, underneath the sky's expanse,
No climate like the south of France!
You 've often heard, I dare to swear,
How plenty ortolans are there;
'Tis true, and more delicious meat,
Upon my honour, I ne'er eat;
The eggs are good; it was ill luck
What day I had not ten to suck;
Yet notwithstanding, to my *goût*,
The bird 's the sweeter of the two."
He went on, talking pert and loud,
When an old Raven, 'mongst the crowd,
Stopp'd short his insolent career—
"Why, what a monstrous bustle 's here!
You travell'd, sir! I speak to you,
Who 've passed so many countries thro';
Say, to what purpose is 't you roam,
And what improvements bring you home?
Has Italy, on which you doat,
Supply'd you with another note?

Or France, which you extol so high,
Taught you with better grace to fly?
I cannot see that both together
Have alter'd you a single feather:
Then tell not us of where you 've been,
Of what you 've done, or what you 've seen;
While you and all your rambling pack
Cuckoos go out, Cuckoos come back."

FABLE II.

The Ant and the Grasshopper.

'TWAS that bleak season of the year,
In which no smiles, no charms appear;
Bare were the trees; the rivers froze;
The hills and mountains capt with snows;
When, lodging scarce and victuals scant,
A Grasshopper address'd an Ant:

And, in a supplicating tone,
Begg'd he would make her case his own.

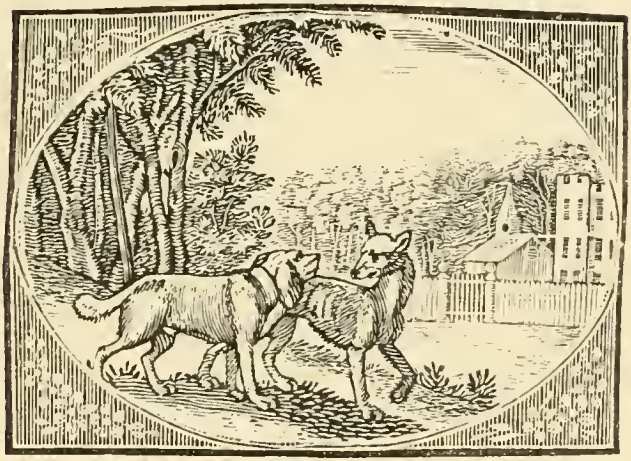
"It was, indeed, a bitter task
To those who were unused to ask;
Yet she was forc'd the truth to say,
She had not broke her fast that day;
His worship, tho', with plenty bless'd,
Knew how to pity the distress'd;
A grain of corn to her was gold,
And Heav'n would yield him fifty-fold."

The Ant beheld her wretched plight,
Nor seem'd unfeeling at the sight;
Yet, still inquisitive to know
How she became reduc'd so low,
Asked her—we 'll e'en suppose in rhyme—
What she did all the summer time?

"In summer time, good sir," said she,
"Ah! these were merry months with me!
I thought of nothing but delight,
And sung, Lord, help me! day and night:
Through yonder meadows did you pass,
You must have heard me in the grass."

"Ah!" cry'd the Ant, and knit his brow—
"But 'tis enough I hear you now;
And, Madam Songstress, to be plain,
You seek my charity in vain:
What, shall th' industrious yield his due
To thriftless vagabonds like you!

Some corn I have, but none to spare,
Next summer learn to take more care ;
And in your frolic moods, remember,
July is follow'd by December."

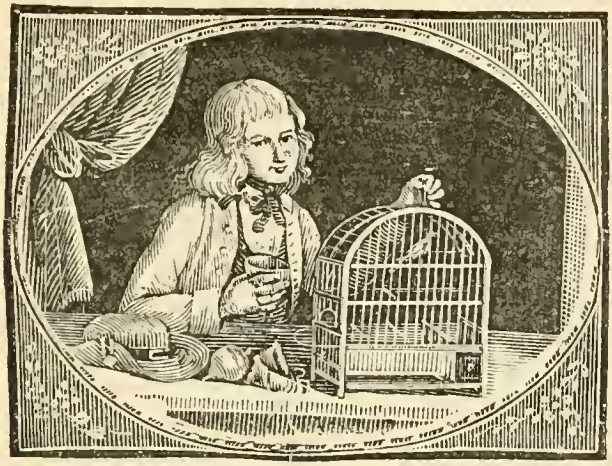


Fable III.

The Wolf and the Dog.

A PROWLING Wolf, that scour'd the plains,
To ease his hunger's griping pains,
Ragged as courtier in disgrace,
Hide-bound, and lean, and out of case,
By chance a well-fed Dog espy'd,
And being kin, and near ally'd,
He civilly salutes the cur :
" How do you, Cuz ? Your servant, sir.
O happy friend ! how gay thy mien !
How plump thy sides, how sleek thy skin !

Triumphant plenty shines all o'er,
And the fat melts at ev'ry pore!
While I, alas! decay'd and old,
With hunger pin'd, and stiff with cold,
With many a howl and hideous groan,
Tell the relentless woods my moan.
Pr'ythee (my happy friend!) impart
Thy wondrous, cunning, thriving art."
"Why, faith, I 'll tell thee as a friend,
But first thy surly manners mend;
Be complaisant, obliging, kind,
And leave the Wolf for once behind."
The Wolf, whose mouth began to water,
With joy and rapture gallop'd after,
When thus the Dog: "At bed and board,
I share the plenty of my lord;
From ev'ry guest I claim a fee,
Who court my lord by bribing me.
In mirth I revel all the day,
And many a game at romps I play:
I fetch and carry, leap o'er sticks,
With twenty such diverting tricks."
"'Tis pretty, faith," the Wolf reply'd,
And on his neck the collar spy'd:
He starts, and without more ado,
He bids the abject wretch adieu:
"Enjoy your dainties, friend; to me
The noblest feast is liberty:
The famish'd Wolf, upon these desert plains,
Is happier than a fawning cur in chains."



Fable IV.

The Nightingale.

HOW few with patience can endure
The evils they themselves procure.
A Nightingale, with snares beset,
At last was taken in a net:
When first she found her wings confin'd,
She beat and flutter'd in the wind,
Still thinking she could fly away;
Still hoping to regain the spray:
But, finding there was no retreat,
Her little heart with anger beat;
Nor did it aught abate her rage;
To be transmitted to a cage.
The wire apartment, tho' commodious,
To her appear'd excessive odious;
And though it furnish'd drink and meat,
She car'd not, for she could not eat;

'Twas not supplying her with food;
She lik'd to gather it from the wood:
And water clear, her thirst to slake,
She chose to sip from the cool lake:
And, when she sung herself to rest,
'Twas in what hedge she lik'd the best:
And thus, because she was not free,
Hating the chain of slavery,
She rather added link to link:
—Just so men reach misfortune's brink.

At length, revolving on her state,
She cries, "I might have met worse fate,
Been seiz'd by kites or prowling cat,
Or stifled in a school boy's hat;
Or been the first unlucky mark,
Sure hit by some fantastic spark."

Then conscience told her, want of care
Had made her fall into the snare;
That men were free their nets to throw;
And birds were free to come or go:
And all the evils she lamented,
By caution might have been prevented.

So, on her perch more pleas'd she stood,
And peck'd the kindly offer'd food;
Resolv'd, with patience, to endure
Ills she had brought, but could not cure.

FABLE V.

The Two Foxes.

TWO hungry Foxes once agreed
To execute a bloody deed,
And make the farmer's poultry bleed.
Thus, as their rage was very hot,
Cocks, hens, and chickens went to pot.
The one (the slaughter being o'er)
Young, and a perfect epicure,
Propos'd on all the spoil to sup,
And at one meal to eat it up.
The other old, at heart a miser,
Refus'd his scheme, and thought it wiser
To lay aside some of the prey,
And so provide for a bad day.
"Listen, my child," says he, "to age;
Experience has made me sage:

I know the various turns of fate:
How changeable is every state!
A mighty treasure we have found;
Success has all our wishes crown'd;
See! the vast havoc all around!
Oh let us not be lavish, son,
Nor throw away what we have won!
Oh let us not consume our store,
But, being frugal, make it more!"
"Your fine harangue," replies the other,
"Might take, were I a griping brother:
But, as I'm generous and free,
It ne'er shall have effect on me.
I'll live, old daddy, while I may
Indulge my noble self with prey,
And feast in spite of all you say.
But should I not—why, to our sorrow,
The fowls will stink before to-morrow.
If we return—the clown will watch us;
And, hang the dog, he'll surely catch us:
In ambush he will watch our waters,
Or else with dogs beat up our quarters."

This said, each fox himself obey'd,
Pursu'd the scheme that he had laid.

The younger one fell to the meat;—
And died o'ercharg'd with what he eat.
The old one, as with joy next morning,
To his hid spoil he was returning,
Ta'en by the farmer in surprise,
Fell by his hand a sacrifice.

Thus each man has his ruling passion,
And ev'ry age its inclination:

The young are heedless in their measures,
And boundless in pursuit of pleasures:
The old are all persuasion past,
Positive, and griping to the last.

Fable VI.

The Butterfly and Boy.

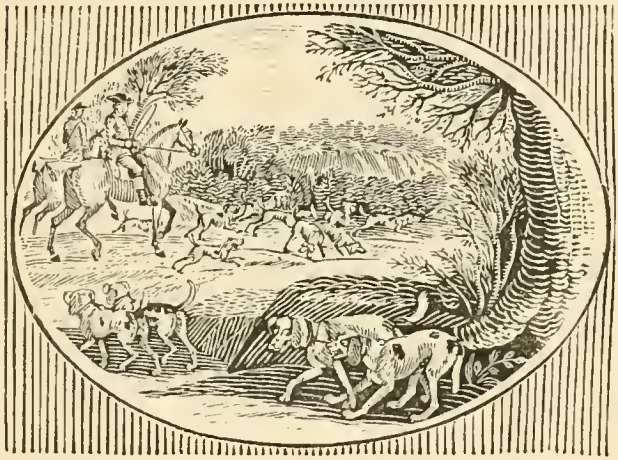
'TWAS on a day serene and fair,
The sun was bright and æther clear,
The rocking winds were lull'd to rest,
And ev'ry murmuring gale supprest;
When, tempted by th' alluring heat,
A Fly forsook her dark retreat
To taste the sweetness of the skies,
And tinge her wings with various dyes;
Restless she rov'd her narrow tour,
And borrow'd paint from ev'ry flow'r;
Till, deck'd with all the insect grace,
She sparkled fairest of her race.

In all her splendour, pomp, and pride,
The winged-gem a Boy espy'd;
Who, pleas'd to see how bright it shone,
Resolv'd to make the prize his own;
And straight with speed began to trace
The gilded Fly from place to place:
But, conscious of some danger near,
The Butterfly her course would steer,
Now high, then low, now here, then there,
To balk the aim, or shun the blow
She justly dreaded from her foe.

The Lad, still eager to pursue
The Fly that always kept in view,
Thro' many a lane and meadow went,
His soul so on the prize was bent,
Undaunted ran from morn to noon,
To gain the heart-enchanting boon.

At length, when sweat bedew'd his face,
And almost weary of the chase,
The Fly in evil hour is caught,
And homewards by the conqueror brought;
Who vainly hop'd, the glorious spoil
Would more than recompense his toil;
But while, with pleasure and surprise,
Her form and beauty feast his eyes,
The Fly escapes, and mounts the skies,
With rallied force augments her flight,
And quick evades his keenest sight;
Then he, deluded youth! gave o'er
All hope to find the booty more.
Enrag'd condemns his cruel fate,
And wept his folly—but too late.

Thus foolish mortals waste their days,
In seeking pleasures, wealth, and praise;
They hunt for honours, titles, fame,
And risk their souls to gain a—name;
Chase every glitt'ring toy they spy,
Just as the Lad pursu'd the Fly,
And e'er they grasp the bauble—die.



FABLE VII.

The Hounds in Couples.

WEDLOCK, a name not much in fashion,
Subservient ofttimes is to passion.
How oft we see a thoughtless pair,
Brought up by Nature's fost'ring care,
When love first fires their youthful breast,
Pant with impatience to be blest:
Tempers unstudied! thoughts untried!
Yet sigh, alas! to be allied.
Because their hours of courtship run
Sweet, under love's meridian sun,

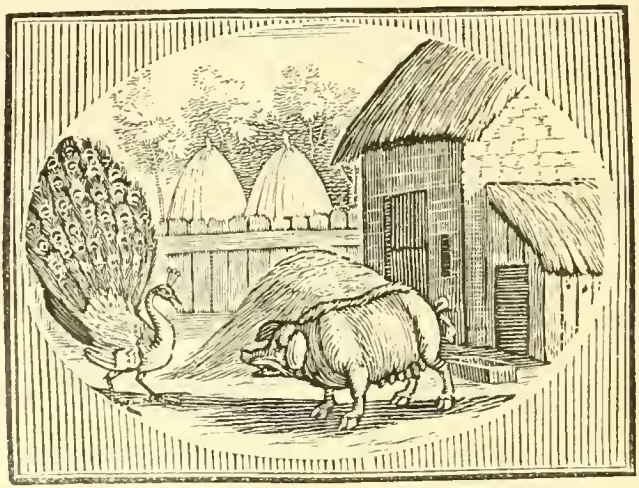
They think to breathe a tranquil life,
And be the happy man and wife.
Vain thought!—the flatt'ring phantom flies,
And opes at length their purblind eyes.
Then—— but attend my simple story,
The sequel will appear before ye.

The morning dawns, with orient sky,
Clad with its purple royalty,
Once more 's the throne of infant day,
And all th' horizon round looks gay.
The horn deep-ton'd the huntsman fills,
The strains re-echo from the hills;
Unkennell'd for the bloody chase,
Impatient rush the babbling race:
Some, widely stretching o'er the plain,
Vocif'rous chaunt the heedless train;
These stretch their limbs, while others bound
In wanton circles o'er the ground.

The squire survey'd with secret pride
The mottled pack on either side:
The puppies did not 'scape his view;
Their youthful tricks were pleasing too.
But lest a part unskill'd, and young,
Should lead the rest with lavish tongue,
It was decreed they should be tied,
And trudge in couples, side by side.
To Ringwood, Sweetlips was assign'd:
These two with patience jogg'd behind.
To Trueman, so 'twas doom'd by fate,
Maiden was yok'd as trav'lling mate:
In these an early fondness grew,
If he did this, she 'd do so too;

From Maiden Trueman scarce would stray,
But spent with her the livelong day ;
For her the half-pick'd bone he 'd spare,
And guard her with a lover's care.
If he in playful frolic run,
Or bask'd beneath th' enlivening sun,
As sure she would his steps attend,
Or near his side her length extend.
From one calm mind their actions grew ;
But now, alas ! they spring from two.
Divided cares invade each breast ;
Divided thoughts and interest ;
Now 'tis they feel the galling chain,
And howl for liberty again.
To join the pack if he 's inclin'd,
She with slow pace will drag behind :
He this way draws, she tugs another,
They prove tormentors to each other.
Now boldly they exert their might,
Snarl answers snarl—bite follows bite ;
With double ire their fury burns,
And gains them mastership by turns.
But strength victorious rules the field,
To force superior all must yield :
At length subdued the fair one lies,
And calls assistance by her cries ;
But ah ! in vain, no succour 's near,
The hunt pursue the tim'rous hare.
Too late she sees from whence arose
The source of all her bleeding woes :
Secluded now from every friend,
Her sorrows but with life can end,

What 's to be done—reflection 's vain,
And serves but to incease her pain ;
Quite spent, she howling yields her life,
A prey to discontent and strife.



FABLE VIII.

The Sow and the Peacock.

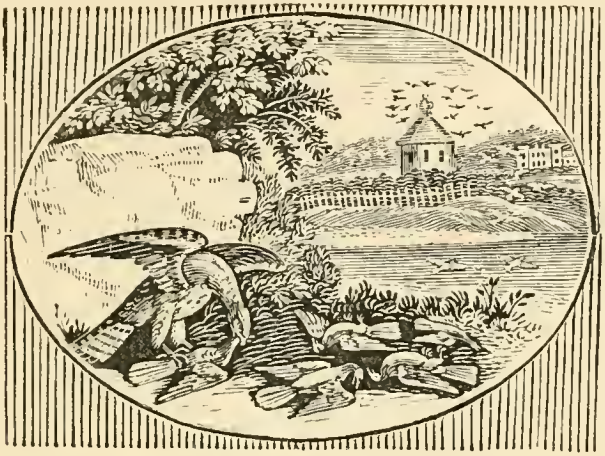
IN days of yore, as authors tell,
When beasts and birds could read and spell,
No matter where, in town or city,
There liv'd a Swine exceeding witty ;
And, for the beauties of her mind,
Excelling all her bristl'd kind :
But yet, to mortify her pride,
She found at last her failing side.
Philosophy she had good store,
Had ponder'd Seneca all o'er ;
Yet all precautions useless prove
Against the pow'r of mighty love.
It happen'd on a sultry day,
Upon her fav'rite couch she lay,—

'Twas a round dunghill soft and warm,
O'ershadow'd by a neighb'ring barn,—
When lo, her winking eyes behold
A creature with a neck of gold,
With painted wings and gorgeous train,
That sparkled like the starry plain:
His neck and breast all brilliant shine
Against the sun. The dazzl'd Swine,
Who never saw the like before,
Began to wonder and adore;
But seeing him so fair and nice,
She left her dunghill in a trice;
And, fond to please, the grunting elf
Began to wash and trim herself;
And from the stinking pool she run
To dry her carcase in the sun;
And rubb'd her sides against a tree:
And now, as clean as hogs can be,
With cautious air and doubtful breast,
The glitt'ring Peacock thus address'd:

"Sir, I, a homely rural Swine,
Can boast of nothing fair nor fine,
No dainties in our troughs appear,
But, as you seem a stranger here,
Be pleas'd to walk into my sty,
A little hut as plain as I.
Pray venture through the humble door;
And tho' your entertainment 's poor,
With me you shall be sure to find
An open heart and honest mind;
And that 's a dainty seldom found
On cedar floors and city ground."

Thus far the Sow had preach'd by rule,
She preach'd, alas! but to a fool;
For this same Peacock, you must know,
Had he been man, had been a beau:
And spoke, like them, but mighty little
That to the point could tend a tittle:
And with an air that testify'd
He 'd got at least his share of pride,
He thus began: "Why, truly now,
You 're very civil, Mrs Sow:
But I am very clean, d'ye see;
Your sty is not a place for me.
Should I go through that narrow door,
My feathers might be soil'd or tore;
Or scented with unsav'ry fumes:
And what am I without my plumes?"

The much offended Sow replies,
And turns asquint her narrow eyes,
"Sir, you 're incorrigibly vain,
To value thus a shining train;
For when the northern wind shall blow,
And send us hail, and sleet, and snow,
How will you save from such keen weathers,
Your merit—sir, I mean your feathers?
As for myself,—to think that I
Should lead an idiot to my sty,
Or strive to make an oaf my friend,
Makes all my bristles stand on end:
But for the future, when I see
A bird that much resembles thee,
I 'll ever make it as a rule,
The shining case contains a fool."



Fable IX.

The King-Dove.

THOUSANDS, who start at Nero's name,
With Nero's power would act the same;
And few in humble spheres can know
How much to want of pow'r they owe—
The passions sleep unrous'd by might,
As objects lie forgot in night;
Tho' unregarded till they 're seen,
They both exist beneath the screen,
And Sol returning, grandeur near,
The passions rise, and shapes appear:
And e'en a dove, the Fable tells,
Begirt with pow'r a tyrant swells—
Thus runs the tale—Between the Kite
And Doves there chanc'd a fatal fight,

Before his force their numbers fled,
The victor on the captives fed—
What can be done?—they pine, they grieve,
The spar'd can scarce be said to live.—

At last, their king Columbo's call
Commands the senate to the hall:
Columbo, best of doves and kings,
Up-rising clapt his painted wings,
Then thus harangu'd 'em from above,
And spake the monarch, and the Dove—
"My suff'ring friends, with grief and pain
I fear we meet but to complain;
Yet my fond bosom fain would know
Your thoughts of our relentless foe—
If any, blest with skill to save,
Have plann'd the proud oppressor's grave,
Whatever perils shall attend
A scheme to save one bleeding friend,
I 'll meet, I 'll vanquish, or no more
Return to this opprobrious shore:
For oh! to steal the tyrant's breath,
I 'd perch upon the dart of death."
He ceas'd, and soft applauses sprung
From ev'ry heart to ev'ry tongue:
Then one arose among the rest,
And mov'd,—That Jove might be addrest,
Arms on their monarch to bestow,
Like those so dreadful on their foe.
The rest consent, the pray'r is made,
Jove will'd, and Nature straight obey'd.
Columbo feels his form distend,
His beak grow crook'd, claws extend;

On his increasing strength presumes,
And pleas'd he shakes his alter'd plumes,
To single combat dares the foe,
And deep imprints the fatal blow.
The Kite expires,—and peace again
Reviv'd to bless Columbo's reign.

But flush'd with conquest, proud in arms,
He longs, he pants, for fresh alarms,
And to himself elated thought—
"Had I these gifts of Jove for nought?"
Now swelling high with proud disdain,
He scorns his meek, his peaceful train;
A thousand wives the monarch claims,
And seizes all their fairest dames;
A thousand slaves attend his will,
A thousand nests his treasures fill;
None for themselves eat, sleep, or love,
'Tis all the King's—imperial Dove!
Too noble grown for common food,
He longs to taste of pigeon's blood;
Nor long the appetite withstood.
With treble anguish now they moan
A wide destroyer on their throne,
Despairing drag the galling chain,
And vainly curse Columbo's reign.
This fatal change let man informed pursue,
Catch rising truths from every fabled view,
And learn from hence no dang'rous pow'r to trust,
E'en with the wise, the gentle, and the just.
Since e'en that pow'r less prompts to good than ill,
And bends to vice vain man's unequal will—
Wrongs to redress ne'er arm alone your friend,
But, cloth'd in equal might, his steps attend;

Let equal arms your injur'd rights maintain,
Divide the strength, the labours, honours, gain:
Still on a level, tho' with conquest bright,
No traitor thoughts shall rise from matchless might:
Peace with her genuine charms shall either bless,
And just dependencies prevent excess.

FABLE X.

The Camelion.

OFT has it been my lot to mark
A proud, conceited, talking spark,
With eyes, that hardly serv'd at most
To guard their master 'gainst a post,
Yet round the world the blade has been
To see whatever could be seen.
Returning from his finish'd tour,
Grown ten times perter than before,

Whatever word you chance to drop,
The travell'd fool your mouth will stop;
"Sir, if my judgment you 'll allow—
I 've seen—and sure I ought to know"—
So begs you 'd pay a due submission,
And acquiesce in his decision.

Two travellers of such a cast,
As o'er Arabia's wild they past,
And on their way in friendly chat
Now talk'd of this, and then of that,
Discours'd a while 'mongst other matter,
Of the Camelion's form and nature.
"A stranger animal," cries one,
"Sure never liv'd beneath the sun:
A lizard's body lean and long,
A fish's head, a serpent's tongue;
Its tooth with triple claw disjoin'd;
And what a length of tail behind!
How slow its pace, and then its hue—
Who ever saw so fine a blue?"

"Hold there," the other quick replies,
"'Tis green—I saw it with these eyes,
As late with open mouth it lay,
And warm'd itself in sunny ray;
Stretch'd at its ease the beast I view'd,
And saw it eat the air for food."

"I 've seen it, sir, as well as you,
And must again affirm it blue:
At leisure I the beast survey'd,
Extended in the cooling shade."

"'Tis green, 'tis green, sir, I assure ye."
"Green!" cries the other in a fury.

"Why, sir—d'ye think I 've lost my eyes?"
"'Twere no great loss," the friend replies;
"For, if they always serve you thus,
You 'll find 'em but of little use."

So high at last the contest rose,
From words they almost came to blows:
When luckily came by a third—
To him the question they refer'd;
And begg'd he 'd tell 'em, if he knew,
Whether the thing was green or blue.

"Sirs," cries the umpire, "cease your pother—
The creature's neither one nor t'other.
I caught the animal last night,
And view'd it o'er by candle light:
I mark'd it well—'twas black as jet—
You stare—but, sirs, I 've got it yet,
And can produce it." "Pray, sir, do:
I 'll lay my life, the thing is blue."
"And I 'll be sworn, that when you 've seen
The reptile, you 'll pronounce him green."

"Well, then, at once to ease the doubt,"
Replies the man, "I 'll turn him out:
And when before your eyes I 've set him,
If you don't find him black, I 'll eat him."
He said; then full before their sight
Produc'd the beast, and lo! 'twas white.
Both star'd, the man look'd wondrous wise—
"My children," the Camelion cries,
Then first the creature found a tongue,
"You all are right, and all are wrong:
When next you talk of what you view,
Think others see, as well as you:

Nor wonder, if you find that none
Prefers your eye-sight to his own."

Fable XI.

The Three Warnings.

THE tree of deepest root is found
Least willing still to quit the ground;
'Twas therefore said by ancient sages,
That love of life increas'd with years:
So much, that in our latter stages,
When pains grow sharp, and sickness rages,
The greatest love of life appears.

This great affection to believe,
Which all confess, but few perceive,
If old assertions can't prevail,
Be pleas'd to hear a modern tale.

When sports went round, and all were gay
On neighbour Dobson's wedding-day,
Death call'd aside the jocund groom
With him into another room:
And looking grave,—"You must," says he,
"Quit your sweet bride, and come with me."
"With you! and quit my Susan's side!
With you!" the hapless husband cry'd:
"Young as I am; 'tis monstrous hard;
Besides, in truth, I 'm not prepar'd:
My thoughts on other matters go,
This is my wedding-night, you know."

What more he urg'd I have not heard:
His reasons could not well be stronger;
For Death the poor delinquent spar'd,
And left to live a little longer.
Yet calling up a serious look,
His hour-glass trembling while he spoke,
"Neighbour," he said, "Farewell: No more
Shall death disturb your mirthful hour;
And further to avoid all blame
Of cruelty upon my name,
To give you time for preparation,
And fit you for your future station,
Three several warnings you shall have
Before you 're summon'd to the grave,
Willing for once I 'll quit my prey,
And grant a kind reprieve:
In hopes you 'll have no more to say,
But when I call again this way
Well pleas'd the world will leave."
To these conditions both consented,
And parted, perfectly contented.

What next the hero of our tale befell,
How long he liv'd, how wise, how well,
How roundly he pursu'd his course,—
And smok'd his pipe, and strok'd his horse,—
The willing muse shall tell:
He chaffer'd on, he bought, he sold,
Nor once perceiv'd his growing old,
Nor thought of death as near:
His friends not false, his wife no shrew,
Many his gains, his children few,
He pass'd his hours in peace;
But while he view'd his wealth increase,
While thus along life's dusty road
The beaten track content he trod,
Old time, whose haste no mortal spares,
Uncall'd, unheeded, unawares,
Brought on his eightieth year.

And now one night in musing mood,
As all alone he sat,
Th' unwelcome messenger of fate,
Once more before him stood.

Half kill'd with anger and surprise,
"So soon return'd!" old Dobson cries:
"So soon, d' ye call it!" Death replies:
"Surely, my friend, you 're but in jest;
Since I was here before,
'Tis six and forty or fifty years at least,
And you are now fourscore."

"So much the worse," the clown rejoin'd:
To spare the aged would be kind:
However, see your search be legal;
And your authority—Is 't regal?

Else you are come on a fool's errand,
With but a secretary's warrant.
Besides, you promis'd me three warnings,
Which I have look'd for nights and mornings.
But, for that loss of time and ease,
I can recover damages."

"I know," cries Death, "that at the best,
I seldom am a welcome guest;
But don't be captious, friend, at least:
I little thought you 'd still be able
To stump about your farm and stable;
Your years have run to a great length,
I wish you joy tho' of your strength."

"Hold," says the farmer, "not so fast,
I have been lame these four years past."

"And no great wonder," Death replies,
"However you still keep your eyes,
And sure to see one's loves and friends
For legs and arms would make amends."

"Perhaps," says Dobson, "so it might,
But latterly I 've lost my sight."

"This is a shocking story, faith,
Yet there's some comfort still," says Death;
Each strives your sadness to amuse,
I warrant you hear all the news."

"There's none," cries he, "and if there were,
I 'm grown so deaf I could not hear."
Nay then," the spectre stern rejoin'd,
"These are unjustifi'ble yearnings;
If you are lame, and deaf, and blind,
You 've had your three sufficient warnings.

So come along, no more we 'll part,
He said, and touch'd him with his dart;
And now old Dobson, turning pale,
Yields to his fate—so ends my tale."

FABLE XII.

The Caterpillar and Butterfly.

THE morning blush'd with vivid red,
And night in sudden silence fled;
Sad Philomel no more complains,
The lark begins his sprightly strains;
Light paints the flow'rs of various hue,
And sparkles in the pendent dew;
Life moves o'er all the quicken'd green,
And beauty reigns, unrival'd queen.

Green as the leaf, on which he lay,
A Caterpillar wak'd to-day:
And look'd around, and chanc'd to 'spy
A leaf of more inviting dye;
From where he lay he crawl'd, and found
The verdant spot's indented bound;
Stretch'd from the verge, he strove to gain
The neighb'ring leaf, but strove in vain.
In that nice moment, prompt to save,
A brother worm this warning gave.

"Oh! turn, advent'rous as thou art,
Nor hence, deceiv'd by hope, depart;
What though the leaf, that tempts thee, shows
More tasteful food, more soft repose;
What, though with brighter spangles gay,
Its dew reflects an earlier ray?
Oh! think what dangers guard the prize;
Oh! think what dangers; and be wise!
The pass from leaf to leaf forbear;
Behold how high they wave in air!
And should'st thou fall, tremendous thought!
What ruin would avenge thy fault?
Thy mangled carcase, writh'd with pain,
Shall mark with blood the dusty plain:
Then death, the dread of all below,
Thy wish—will surely end thy woe;
Untimely death, for now to die,
Is ne'er to rise a butterfly."
"A Butterfly!" th' Advent'rer cry'd,
"What's that?" "A bird," his friend reply'd,
"To which this reptile form shall rise,
And gorgeous mount the lofty skies;

The joyful season time shall bring,
He bears it on his rapid wing.
An age there is, when all our kind,
Disdain the ground, and mount the wind:
And should thy friend this age attain—"
With haste the worm reply'd again,
"Say what assurance canst thou give,
That I with birds a bird shall live?
For could I trust thy pleasing tale,
No wanton wish should e'er prevail;
For what, that worms obtain, can vie
With bliss of birds that wing the sky?"
"Believe my words," th' Adviser said,
"Since not of private int'rest bred;
Not on thy life or death depend
My pleasure or my pain——Attend!
Like thee, to all the future blind,
I knew not wings for worms design'd,
Till yon last sun's ascending light
Remov'd the dusky shades of night.
Soon as his rays, from heav'n sublime,
Shone on that leaf you wish to climb;
That leaf, which shades, in earliest hours,
This less conspicuous spot of ours:
Surpris'd, a lovely form I saw,
That touch'd me with delight and awe;
'Twas near, and while my looks betray'd
My wonder, thus the Stranger said:

"'If view'd by thee with wond'rous eyes
My graceful shape and vary'd dyes,
New wonder still prepare to feel,
Amazing truths my words reveal:

For know, like thine my humble birth;
Like thee, I crawl'd a worm on earth.'

"Ah! mock me not, said I, nor seek
A worthless triumph o'er the weak;
Canst thou, thy form with down o'erspread,
By nature crown'd thy regal head,
Canst thou my reptile shape have worn?
My reptile shape, of all the scorn!
Hast thou! whose gorgeous wings display
Each vary'd tint that drinks the day,
More bright than drops of orient dew,
More gay than flow'rs of gaudiest hue,
With purple edg'd, and fring'd with gold,
Like light, too splendid to behold!
Hast thou, an abject worm like me,
Crawl'd prone on earth! it cannot be.

"'Oh! cease the doubts,' the Stranger cry'd,
'To faith thy happiness ally'd—
Not thrice the morn these eyes have view'd,
Since genial spring my life renew'd;
From death-like slumbers wak'd, I found
A guardian shell invest me round;
The circling shield I broke, nor knew
How long my safety hence I drew;
But soon perceiv'd, and knew the spot,
Where once, a worm, I fix'd my lot;
The *past* with wonder touch'd my breast,
More wonder still the *now* imprest,
With pleasure mixt—the pleasure grew,
At ev'ry thought, at ev'ry view;
Transform'd, my unknown pow'r I try,
I wave my wings, I rise! I fly!

Enraptur'd with the blissful change,
From field to field I wanton range;
From flow'r to flow'r, from tree to tree,
And see whate'er I wish to see;
Now glide along the daisy'd ground;
Now wheel in wanton circles round;
Now mount aloft, and sport in air,
Transported, when I will, and where,
Still present, to whate'er invites,
Each moment brings me new delights;
Nor fear allays the joys I know,
The dangers scorn'd that lurk below;
No trampling hoof, my former dread,
Can crush me, mangled, to the dead.
Ev'n man himself pursues, in vain,
My sportive circuit o'er the plain.'
He said, and raptur'd with the thought,
New charms his bright'ning plumage caught,
He clapt his wings, his rapid flight
I trac'd with fond desiring sight,
Oh! glorious state—reserv'd to this,
I risk not life for reptile bliss;
Oh! catch the glowing wish from me,
The same the bliss reserv'd for thee;
Desist from ev'ry rash design,
And beauty, plumes, and wings are thine."
He ceas'd—th' Advent'rer thus reply'd:
"By thee the fancy'd change be try'd,
The *now* is *mine*, the *now* alone,
The *future* fate's—a dark unknown!
To nature's voice my ears incline;
All lovely, loving, all divine!

To joy she courts, she points the way,
And chides this cold, this dull delay.
Farewell—let hope thy bliss supply,
And count thy gains with fancy's eye;
Be thine the wings that time shall send,
Believing and obliging friend."—

He said, and sneering sly disdain,
The neighb'ring leaf attempts to gain;
He falls—all bruis'd on earth he lies;
Too late repents, and groans, and dies.
His friendly monitor, with care,
Avoids each pleasure-baited snare,
False pleasure, false, and fatal too!
Superior joys he keeps in view;
They come—the genial spring supplies
The wings he hoped, and lo! he flies;
Tastes all that summer suns prepare,
And all the joys of earth and air!

Fable XIII.

The Two Doves.

TWO Turtles once, of gentlest kind,
In softest bands by love were join'd;
'Til tired of home Columbo grew,
And pensive sigh'd for something new;
For distant realms prepar'd to part,—
When spoke the partner of his heart:
"Why should my dear Columbo rove,
And leave me widow'd in the grove—
What ill can worse than absence prove?
Yet let the toils, the perils, cares,
Which fate for travellers prepares,
Retard thy speed—attend the spring,
And wait the zephyr's aiding wing;
What haste?—this hour, ill omen'd found!
The raven's croak was heard around;

Hawks, nets, and ills of ev'ry kind
Henceforth shall haunt my boding mind ;
And what does Heav'n at home deny
That thou canst wish, or Heav'n supply ?"

These words in doubt Columbo hold,
Still weakly vain, and rashly bold ;
At length his restless wish prevails,
And love, and fear, and prudence fails :
When thus he spoke with cheerful air—
"From Turturella far be care,
No more let tears those eyes distain,
Whate'er I seek three days shall gain ;
Returning then, to thee I 'll tell
Whate'er I saw, or me befell :
Amusing thus the pensive day,
Who little see, can little say,
Of rich description full, my tale
Shall oft thy listening ear regale ;
The scenes I 'll paint so strong, so true,
In fancy thou shalt travel too."

This said, Farewell dissolves his heart,
And wet with mutual tears they part.

As Turturella pensive sate,
In fancy wand'ring with her mate,
Far as her utmost ken she sees
A bird approach by slow degrees ;
Not form'd for flight he seem'd, nor song,
But stopp'd by turns, and limp'd along :
Her pains who feels can tell alone,
The bird for chang'd Columbo known ;
Her mate, with pearly tears to greet,
Down from her nest she flew to meet.

Awhile with silent grief opprest,
At length she softly him addrest :
" Oh ! tell me, dear Columbo, tell
What scenes you saw, what woes befell ;
Why wounded thus Columbo mourns,
And ere th' appointed day returns ? "
With falt'ring voice Columbo cry'd,
" From thee no more my heart I hide—
Scarce from this peaceful grove I past
When sudden clouds the skies o'ercast ;
I saw the storm, for shelter sought,
A single tree that shelter brought,
Thin leav'd, and pervious to the show'r,
I felt the rig'rous season's power.
The cloud dissolv'd, benumb'd with cold,
Again my dripping wings unfold ;
In neighb'ring fields some corn I view,
And, hov'ring near, a turtle too ;
By flatt'ring hopes deluded there,
I struggled in the fowler's snare :
The turtle tutor'd to betray,
Beneath the bait a net there lay.
Unwonted strength despair supply'd,
I broke the snare my feet that ty'd ;
With less than half my tail I fled,
And trail'd behind a broken thread,
A remnant of the snare, when lo !
A vulture sees me, dreadful foe !
Just as he stoop'd to snatch the prey,
From heav'n an eagle wing'd his way ;
I, while the sons of rapine fight,
Improv'd the lucky hour in flight ;

The ruins of a cot were near,
I thought my dangers ended here ;
Deceitful thought ! a playful boy
(The cruel race in sport destroy)
Whirl'd round the sling, the rapid stone
Laid bare my pinion to the bone.
Yet reach I living this abode,
What signal mercies Heav'n bestow'd !
Left in this grove to sigh alone
What fate has Turturella known ?"
"More signal yet, by far," said she,
"The mercies Heav'n bestow'd on me."
"Alas ! what woes," Columbo cry'd,
"In this short absence hast thou try'd ?
What near escapes to equal mine ?
Amazing marks of love divine !"
"The woes averted from my head
Are those which thou hast felt," she said ;
"No near escapes 'twas mine to prove,
What more amazing mark of love !
In *ease* and *safety* more I gain
Than *life* to thee, preserv'd with pain,
See then the mercies that I meant,
Which Heav'n to give me, gave Content !
Learn hence the gifts of Jove to prize,
And, ere misfortunes teach, be wise."

Fable XIV.

The Beau and Butterfly.

WHEN summer deckt each sylvan scene,
And sunshine smil'd along the green,
When groves allur'd with noon-tide shade,
And purling brooks refresh'd the glade ;
An empty form of empty show,
A flutt'ring insect, call'd a Beau,
In gaudy colours rich and gay,
A mere papilio of the day,
Was seen around the fields to rove,
And haunt, by turns, the stream and grove :
A silver zone entwin'd his head,
His belly shone with lively red,
His wings were green, but studded o'er
With gold-embroider'd spots before.
Around him various insects came,
Of diff'rent colour, diff'rent name ;

And, ting'd with every gorgeous dye,
Among the rest a Butterfly;
His wings are spread with wanton pride,
And beauty fades from all beside.
The Beau beholds, with envious eyes,
The living radiance as it flies:
"And shall," said he, "this worthless thing,
That lives but on a summer's wing,
This flying worm, more gaudy shine,
And wear a dress more gay than mine?
Is this wise Nature's equal care
To deck a Butterfly so fair,
While man, her worthiest, greatest part,
Must wear the homely rags of art?"
Thus reason'd he, as reason beaux,
The subject of their logic clothes;
When thus the Butterfly reply'd,
With deeper tints by anger dy'd:
"Vain, trifling mortal! could'st thou boast
To prize what Nature prizes most
On man bestow'd, thou would'st not see
With envy aught she gives to me.
This painted vestment, all my store,
She gives, and I can claim no more—
But man, for greater ends design'd,
Should boast the beauties of the mind.
More bright than gold with wisdom shine,
And virtue's sacred charms be thine:
To rule the world by reason taught,
On dress disdain to waste a thought;
For he, whom folly bends so low,
Ambitious to be thought a beau,

Is studious only to be gay,
In toilet-arts consumes the day;
And, the long trifling labours o'er,
Takes wing, and bids the world adore;
Looks down with scorn on rival flies,
Himself less splendid and less wise;
With scorn, his scorn return'd again,
Proud insect! impotently vain!
The fool who thus by self is priz'd,
By others justly is despis'd."
She said, and flutter'd round on high,
Nor stay'd to hear the Beau's reply.

FABLE XV.

The Bears and Bees.

AS two young Bears in wanton mood,
Forth-issuing from a neighb'ring wood,

Came where th' industrious Bees had stor'd
In artful cells their luscious hoard;
O'erjoy'd they seiz'd with eager haste
Luxurious on the rich repast.
Alarm'd at this, the little crew
About their ears vindictive flew.
The beasts, unable to sustain
Th' unequal combat, quit the plain:
Half blind with rage, and mad with pain,
Their native shelter they regain;
There sit, and now discreeter grown,
Too late their rashness they bemoan;
And this by dear experience gain,
"That pleasure 's ever bought with pain."
So when the gilded baits of vice
Are plac'd before our longing eyes,
With greedy haste we snatch our fill,
And swallow down the latent ill;
But when experience opes our eyes,
Away the fancied pleasure flies—
It flies, but oh! too late we find
It leaves a real sting behind.

Fable XVI.

The Trees.

ONCE on a time, when great Sir Oak
Held all the trees beneath his yoke,
The monarch, anxious to maintain,
In peaceful state, his sylvan reign,
Saw, to his sorrow and distraction,
His subject trees take root in faction,
And, though late join'd in union hearty,
Now branching into shoots of party,
Each sturdy stick of factious wood
Stood stiff and stout for public good :
For patriots ever, 'tis well known,
Seek others welfare, not their own,
And all they undertake, you know,
Is meant *pro bono publico.*

The hardy Fir, from northern earth
Who took its name, and drew its birth,
The Oak plac'd next him to support
His government, and grace his court.
The Fir, of an uncommon size,
Rear'd his tall head unto the skies,
O'er-topp'd his fellow-plants, his height
Who view'd, and sicken'd at the sight:
With envy ev'ry fibre swell'd,
While in them the proud sap rebell'd;
"Shall then," they cried, "the Ash, the Elm,
The Beech, no longer rule the helm?
What! shall the ignoble Fir, a plant,
In tempest born, and nurs'd in want,
Far from black regions of the north,
And native famine, issue forth;
In this our happier soil take root,
And dare our birthright to dispute?"
On this the fatal storm began,
Confusion thro' the forest ran;
Mischief in each dark shade was brewing,
And all betoken'd general ruin:
While each, to make their party good,
Brib'd the vile shrubs and underwood:
And now the Bramble and the Thistle
Sent forth essay, ode, epistle;
To which anon, with equal mettle,
Replied the Thorn and stinging Nettle.
"What 's to be done, or how oppose
The storm which in the forest rose?"
Grief shook the mighty monarch's mind,
And his sighs labour'd in the wind.

At length, the tumult, strife, and quarrel,
Alarming the sagacious laurel,
His mind unto the King he broke,
And thus addrest him: "Heart of Oak!
Sedition is on foot, make ready;
And fix your empire firm and steady.
Faction in vain shall shake the wood,
While you pursue the general good.
Fear not a foe, trust not a friend,
Upon yourself alone depend.
If not too partially ally'd,
By fear or love to either side,
In vain shall jarring factions strive,
Cabals in vain dark plots contrive.
Slave to no foe, dupe to no minion,
Maintain an equal just dominion:
So shall you stand by storms unbroke,
And all revere the ROYAL OAK.

FABLE XVII.

The Philosopher and Glow-Worm.

WHEN toilsome hours of day were spent,
The world seem'd wrapt in calm content,
Each anxious care forsook the breast,
Sleep gently clos'd each eye to rest,
Cynthia her brightest aspect wore,
And Heav'n's expanse was studded o'er,
A sage, by meditation drawn,
Forsook his cot, and sought the lawn;
In contemplation deep he stray'd,
And nature's dozing charms survey'd;
On either hand new beauties view'd,
As he his tranquil walk pursu'd.
By chance, a Glow-Worm, in his way,
Shone forth his little glitt'ring ray,
Proudly unfolding ev'ry grace,
As trailing round from place to place;

Illumining the moss-fring'd plain,
On other worms he look'd disdain.
The sage, with philosophic eye,
Survey'd the wand'rer crawling by ;
Then stooping low, with gentle hand,
High lifts him from the dew-fraught land.
The grub, tho' not dismay'd thro' fear,
Conscious he was not in his sphere,
Withdrew his beam of light away,
To hear what man—vain man—would say.
The learn'd Philosopher, amaz'd,
Paus'd for some time, and anxious gaz'd ;
Astonish'd that the worm should die
So soon, then careless threw it by ;
But first, this application made :—
" This creeping reptile, lo ! is dead,
And with his life, his glory's fled.
So is 't with all *ambition's* race,
Who fill up each exalted place :
Brilliant they shine with borrow'd ray,
And wanton in the blaze of day,
'Till fortune's second wheel turns round,
And leaves them where they first were found."

The Glow-Worm with attention heard,
And weigh'd with prudence ev'ry word,
Trim'd bright his little lamp again,
And shone more beauteous o'er the plain ;
Then thus address'd the wond'ring sage,
The known Philos'pher of the age :
" Know thou, the happy pow'r to shine
Is truly man's as well as mine ;
I know my sphere, did he the same,
He 'd tread *that* path that leads to fame ;

Did he in dang'rous times retire,
And check with care *ambition's* fire,
Like me he might new lustre spread,
And deck with laurels fresh his head.
But, coxcomb like, he 's led astray
To shine, and shines but for a day."

FABLE XVIII.

The Angler and the Philosopher.

BESIDE a gentle murm'ring brook
An Angler took his patient stand;
He ey'd the stream with anxious look,
And wav'd his rod with cautious hand.

The bait with nicest art was drest,
The fishes left their safe retreat;
And one more eager than the rest,
Look'd, long'd, and swallow'd the deceit.

Too late she felt the poignant smart,
Her pitying friends her fate deplore;
The Angler with well-practis'd art,
Play'd, hook'd, and drew her to the shore.

Lur'd by the beauty of the day,
The sun now sinking in the sky,
A sage pursu'd his walk that way,
And saw the bleeding victim lie.

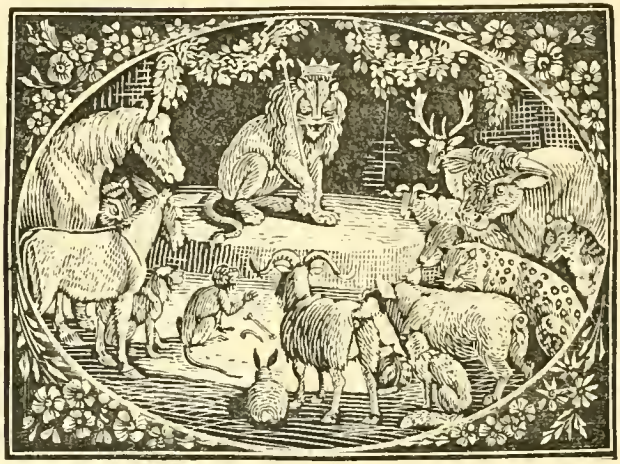
Far in the vale of years declin'd,
He watch'd the course of nature's law;
And thus with philosophic mind,
He moralis'd on what he saw:

"Indulge, awhile, the pensive vein,
And fix this image in your mind;
You 've hook'd a fish; observe its pain,
And view the state of human kind.

"Fate gives us line, we shift the scene,
And jocund traverse to and fro;
Pain, sickness, still will intervene,
We feel the hook where'er we go.

"If, proudly, we our schemes extend,
And look beyond the present hour,
We find our straiten'd prospects end,
And own an over-ruling pow'r.

"Awhile we sport, awhile lament,
Fate checks the line, and we are gone;
Dragg'd from our wonted element,
To distant climes, untry'd, unknown."



FABLE XIX.

The Lion and other Beasts in Council.

THE kingly ruler of the plain,*
Just ent'ring on his savage reign,
To grace his coronation feast,
Sent and invited every beast ;
And soon the royal cave beheld
With all his various subjects fill'd :
For leagues of peace were lately made,
And lambs and wolves together play'd ;
Foxes and tim'rous hares agree
With dogs, their common enemy :
And now a sumptuous table spread,
Friendly they altogether fed ;

* The Lion.

And having din'd, sit still and prate
Familiarly of this and that:
Till with a kind, yet serious look,
The King, desiring audience, spoke.

"My friends, and loving subjects all,
Who 've kindly thus obey'd my call,
I give you thanks, and now I crave
Your further kindness to receive:
I 'm seated on the throne, you see,
In peaceable tranquillity;
No cares of war disturb my breast;
With taxes you are not opprest;
This life I 'll therefore spend in joy;
None shall be happier than I.
But lest I should pursue false bliss,
What I would ask of you is this,
To tell me—what true pleasure is?"

The beasts seem'd pleas'd with this request;
Each thought he could advise him best,
And striving who should silence break,
They all at once rose up to speak:
Till by his majesty's command,
Their forward zeal was soon restrain'd;
Who calmly bidding them sit down,
And let him hear them one by one,
Th' impatient Monkey thus began:

"Pleasure, my liege, is free from strife,
To lead a thoughtless, easy life;
Airy, and wild, and brisk, and gay,
To sing, and dance, and laugh, and play;
Now following this, now that, and that,
And so 't be new, no matter what;

Free from all rules of just and fit,
Do mischief first, then laugh at it:
This is diversion, pleasure, wit."

The Ass was here provok'd to rise,
And gravely thus bray'd his advice:
"If," said he, "real pleasure is
In such buffoonery as this,
Then beaux and smarts, amongst mankind,
Are in their notions most refin'd;
But well we know, by men of sense,
They 're tax'd with vain impertinence.
I therefore think true pleasure lies
(If I may be thought fit t'advise)
In careless indolence and ease,
Not suff'ring anything to tease,
Regardless what th' ambitious fly at,
So we 're but undisturb'd and quiet;
Well knowing 'tis but to attain
More ease, that they 're at so much pain.
And he 's more happy, none can doubt it,
Who 's easy without taking pains about it."

Now rose the Hog, and with a grunt,
"Pleasure," cry'd he, "they know nought on 't.
A life trail'd on in laziness
Can only suit a stupid Ass,
And fool'd away in Monkey mirth,
It 's really full as little worth;
For doing nothing worthy fame
And doing nothing 's much the same.
But if you 'd real pleasure know,
Let generous liquor smiling flow;
In jovial crews spend every hour,
And drink, and sing, and rant, and roar:

Thus every care will sink and drown,
Whilst mirth and joy run laughing round.
I seem a monarch while I drink so,
And you 'll be a god do you but think so."

Here bursts the Goat into a laugh,
And thus beginning with a scoff:
"Doubtless," said he, "it must be fine
T'exalt a nasty, dirty swine,
To such a height in fancying,
As to believe himself a King.
But that which thus perverts our senses
Can have, I think, but small pretences
To recommend it to our favour,
As pleasure of the truest flavour.
Nature, methinks, should guide in this,
Who seems t'have shewn the highest bliss,
In having plac'd the sweetest gust,
In gratifying natural lust.
And that 'tis the sublimest joy,
I think 's so plain none can deny.
Witness the mad tormenting pain,
When disappointed, we sustain.
Witness how eagerly we press on,
Witness our raptures in possession."

But here the Leopard, rising slow,
Expos'd his beauteous spots to show,
And with a grave majestic face,
Thus gave his verdict in the case:
"Pleasure consists not in such short
Imperfect transitory sport,
Of which the pains we 're at to get it,
O'erpays the bliss when we come at it;

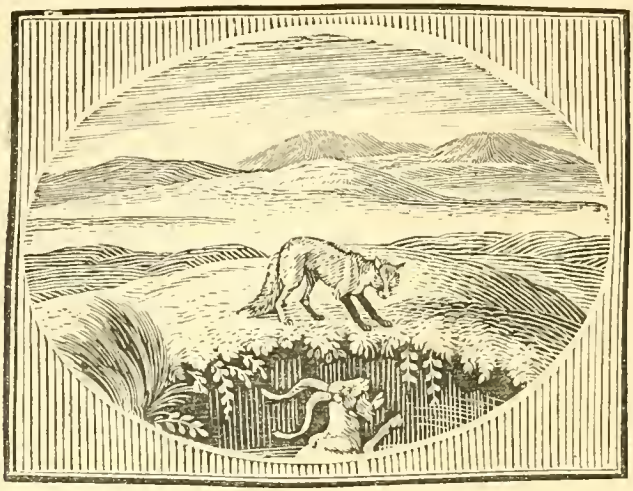
Nor can it e'er be call'd true joy,
With such a mixture of alloy.
No, that must be the most refin'd
Which most exalts and charms the mind ;
And nothing sure more charming is,
Than honour, pomp, and dignities,
Than grandeur and magnificence,
Than sumptuous trains and vast expense,
Than place, distinction, and preferment,
And when we die, a grand interment."

At this the Horse, with noble look,
Raising his crested neck, thus spoke :
" That merit should be rais'd on high,
I think's so just none can deny ;
But he who places all his bliss
In the external pomp of this,
Knows not what greatness, nor what pleasure is;
His judgment errs as much at least
As his who thinks that painting best
Which is in gaudiest colours drest.
Of both we may affirm the same,
Their taste lies only in the gilded frame.
I grant preferment, honour, place,
Are rising steps to happiness ;
But whilst we 're upwards thus aspiring,
We 're anxious still, and still desiring.
To act with an unbounded will,
Can only our desires fulfil ;
Whence, the highest bliss, in my opinion,
Must be in power and dominion."

Thus all their various sense exprest,
And each advis'd what he thought best ;

But still what each as best esteem'd
Was by the next that spoke condemn'd :
Meanwhile the savage monarch sate,
Attentive to the warm debate ;
The nature saw, without disguise,
Of every beast in his advice.
But soon the disputants grew rude,
Confusion, noise, tumultuous feud
Enrage the jarring multitude.
Till weary'd out, the royal beast
Thus spoke, and silenc'd all the rest :

" Cease, cease your vain contention, cease
Your shallow schemes of happiness ;
Which only have confirm'd me more,
'Tis where I thought it was before.
Greatness is no establishment
Of real bliss, or true content ;
Luxurious banquets soon disgust ;
We're quickly pall'd with sensual lust :
Virtue alone can give true joy ;
The sweets of virtue never cloy.
To take delight in doing good,
In justice, truth, and gratitude,
In aiding those whom cares oppress,
Administ'ring comfort to distress :
These, these are joys which all who prove
Anticipate the bliss above.
These are the joys, and these alone
We ne'er repent or wish undone."
He spoke ; the beasts without delay
Rose from their seats, and sneak'd away.



FABLE XX.

The Goat and Fox.

STUDIOUS from diff'ring tales to show
That virtue makes our bliss below,
My warning voice to ev'ry heart,
May ev'ry faithful ear impart;
This one important truth believ'd,
Who can by vice be still deceiv'd?
Bliss is our aim, and bliss our end,
And he who points the path, a friend.
A Goat and Fox, by joint consent,
Together once a journey went;
With patient steps from morning's dawn,
They measur'd hill, and vale, and lawn;
When Phœbus in the zenith rode,
A cheerless, pathless waste they trod;
The fainting wand'rers wide around,
With sighs survey'd the burning ground;

Again, and yet again they look,
To find the welcome cooling brook;
The welcome cooling brook in vain
They sought around the sun-burnt plain.
Onward they slowly pass, when lo!
A pit—and water—deep below;
Urg'd by a strong desire to drink,
They both leap headlong from the brink.
For appetite still foremost goes,
Quite blind to all beyond its nose;
And reason, impotently kind,
A tardy friend, limps far behind.

Now when our pair had drank amain,
They thought of getting out again;
And long with aching hearts they try'd,
But this the steep ascent denied.
Reynard at length the goat addrest,
And thus his wily thought exprest:

"Courage, my friend,—be rul'd by me,
We 'll soon from this mischance be free;
Here—of the pit the shallowest place,
On your hind legs your body raise,
And while thy horns my weight sustain,
At one light bound the shore I 'll gain;
And thence effectual aid can lend
To save thee, too, my dearest friend?"—

The Goat consents—and by his aid
The Fox his leap successful made;
His friend look'd up, well pleased no doubt,
And deem'd himself as good as out;
But the false Fox with barb'rous sneer,
Cry'd, "Pox! how came you scrambling here?"

The Goat reply'd, "Forbear to flout,
Lest I should ask how you got out."
Said he, "Of that no doubt remains,
You 'd horns, my friend,—and I had brains,
You wear that wisdom on your chin,
Which I, more modest, hide within.
We beasts of sprightly thought despise
All who like thee look gravely wise—
Improve these useful hints aright,
You 'll profit much—and so good night."

This said, he titt'ring slunk away,
The Goat remain'd to death a prey.
In wonder lost, with horror chill'd,
With anguish, indignation fill'd,
The traitor-friend's enormous guile,
Engross'd his shudd'ring soul awhile;
Awhile the wretched beast forgot
His pity'd, helpless, hopeless lot;
But after short suspense his woes
Return'd—as the stem'd torrent flows,
With trebled force—he scarce sustain'd
The shock—and thus at length profan'd:
"For ever let that maxim cease,
'That virtue's paths are paths of peace.'
Where's that reward which learned pride
Boasts none from virtue can divide?
Where the sure woes of various kinds,
Which fate to vice for ever binds?
Life, joy (or what could make him smile),
The Fox obtains thro' horrid guile;
My life, my humble guiltless joys,
At once a gen'rous trust destroys;

Jove's slumb'ring vengeance lets him fly,
His goodness slumbers while I die."

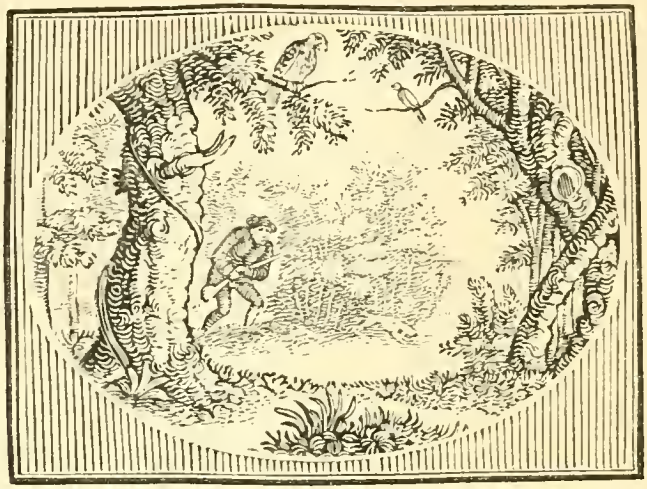
A sylvan god who pass'd that way
(Of old none wander'd more than they),
By chance the rash impeachment heard,
And instant on the brink appear'd.
"Look up," he cries, "no more despair,
The help you wish prevents your prayer;
Safe on the wish'd substantial plain,
I'll set thy dying feet again.
The Fox with envy didst thou see?
Henceforth thyself a Fox shalt be.—
Thou shalt his prosp'rous vice possess,
And taste a Fox's happiness."

The thing was done as soon as said,
A Fox, the Goat enfranchis'd, fled;
But feels within his alter'd mind,
His narrow'd love to self confin'd.
No more from others good his breast
The social joy serene possess'd;
No more by kind compassion mov'd,
His mercy is by foes approv'd.
Now mutual wants, love's band below,
No means to fix a friend bestow;
Unlov'd, unloving, deep in earth
He gives his schemes of plunder birth.
From injur'd man, his friend so late,
He fears the stroke of potent hate;
With grief looks back on periods past,
His bloodless food, a blest repast!
Which late he cropt in peace profound,
With flocks, and herds, and men around;

Yet now abhors that guiltless food,
To rapine doom'd, and thirst of blood;
And mourns the days (to this a slave)
When heav'n a happier nature gave:
"By dear experience now I know,
That virtue 's only bliss below,"
He, sighing, said, in sad despair,
And thus prefers a falt'ring pray'r:
"Ye gracious pow'rs who rule above!
Who virtue and it's vot'ries love!
I see my fault, my fault repent,
And own I ask'd the pains you sent.
I now th' unrighteous thought forego,
That vice is bliss, and virtue woe:
Oh! make me what I was again,
Tho' faint I tread the scorching plain;
Tho' with a faithless Fox I stray,
Me tho' again his wiles betray,
Make me a goat, tho' void of wit,
You leave me dying in the pit:
'Tis better far than thus alone
To live without one joy my own;
For while the past my mind retains,
My present pleasures are but pains."

He pray'd, to Jove the pray'r ascends;
His ear to pray'rs like these He lends.
"I (said the god) thy wish fulfil,
Henceforth, be virtuous—if you will
Be man—to him that pow'r I give;
Go, and by past experience live."
Transform'd again with lifted eyes,
The man his story thus applies:—

"From what appears, how little do we know
What others feel of happiness or woe!
Is vice your envy when of health possess'd,
With power, and pelf, and all externals blest?
Know that amidst that health, and power and pelf,
The thriving villain must abhor himself;
For who can bear, tho' desperately brave,
The voice of conscience when it calls him knave?
Or who so dull, without regret to miss
Of conscious goodness the substantial bliss?
Ask your own heart, and search thro' all you know,
Consult each various scene of life below,
All, all this universal truth attest,
The virtuous are, and can alone be blest."



FABLE XXI.

The Kite and Nightingale.

I 'LL try to mimic honest *Gay*,
Who had a very decent way;
A pleasant wight of simple sort,
For ever filliping the court.
Let courts be quiet, if they know
The happy knack of being so.
The pestilence flies everywhere,
Almost indefinite as air:
All places need the fanning breeze,
To dissipate the rank disease.
Vice—(not like beasts for show—confin'd)
Runs mad at large, and bites mankind:
Alike the taint infects the brain
Of those that dwell in court and plain:
The same wild fury acts the will
In different ways, with different skill.

A starving Kite, upon a bar
(Worn out with long fatigues of war),
Whose pointed claws, and hooked bill,
Shew'd his profession was to kill,
Thus grieving spoke in doleful strain :
(Your heart will pity and disdain)—

"How blind is everything on earth !
And how injurious to my worth !
Tho' all the cote my sorrow see,
No dove will help me with a pea :
Hob's field they robb'd a month together,
I never hurt a single feather ;
The lark, whom I secure to rest
(I slew the snake that robb'd her nest),
Will not a little worm supply ;
But would rejoice to see me die.
No crow invites me to a treat,
Tho' what I kill'd he often eat.
Man, were he grateful, would determine
My merit in destroying vermin ;
And make me happy to the last,
In justice to my service past.
But man, that thankless wretch is he,
Prefers yon Nightingale to me."

"Alas ! (the Nightingale replies)
I own my little merit lies
In innocence and tender cares
About my family affairs ;
Or chaunting soft a pretty tale,
To please my neighbours of the vale ;
Perhaps we gratitude may want,
Because you are too arrogant :

Your worth, display'd with all your skill,
Lies chiefly in omitting ill;
And only then for want of power
To seize the dove you would devour.
There 's not a lark that flies, but knows
You long to grasp her in your claws.
The crow you never meant to treat;
You left him what you could not eat;
And man, who most a villain needs,
Detests you for your wicked deeds.
You pilfer duckling, game, and chicken,
Which furnish man with dainty picking.
There 's not a poacher roams the wood,
But who would shoot you, if he could."

Just had he said; forth pops a spark,
With gun and spaniel from the park;
The Kite he kens, with levell'd gun,
And brings the bloody boaster down.

Thus justly villains are repaid,
Who follow mischief as a trade:
Who merit can pretend alone,
When cruel work is to be done,
To crush their kindred sort of men
With sword, with halter, or with pen;
Whose hollow merit is, at best,
To seem the most, and be the least;
Who own no right, pursue no guide,
But only interest or pride;
Or both together do prefer,
To run most certainly to err.
Such always claim beyond their due,
And always think you wrong them too;

Do all the wrong, yet most complain,
Whene'er they spread the net in vain;
Or bait a hook that fails to catch
The simple trout for which they watch;
And innocence, with squint and frown,
Condemn *for vices all their own.*

FABLE XXII.

The Four Bulls.

FRIENDSHIP! source of bliss sedate,
Best balm for all the wounds of fate!
'Tis thine the sinking heart to raise,
When love retires, and health decays;
Unmix'd with thy sublimer fire,
Love 's but a fev'rish low desire,
And ill the self-destroying flame
Deserves that soft angelic name.

Oh! could this verse, this fabling lay,
Extend or but confirm thy sway!
Or, warn'd by this, if only one
Thy foes' destructive arts shall shun!

Since dangers rise with every sun,
With ev'ry sand united run;
Four Bulls, by mutual vows ally'd,
The morrow's unknown ills defy'd;
As one they mov'd, they fought, they fed,
And safety rose by union bred,
Nor this alone the good they found,
The private bliss of each went round;
Hence doubly bless'd the gen'rous heart,
Which scorns the bliss it can't impart.
From day to day the Lion came,
But matters still appear'd the same:
This smote his inmost soul with grief,
For much he long'd for fav'rite beef;
What can he do? he fears to wage
Unequal war, and four engage.
Thought follows thought—he finds in vain:
Yet thought to thought succeeds again.
Half-form'd resolves, and embryo schemes,
And all the train of statesmen's dreams,
With conflict rude disturb his mind,
To this nor that success inclin'd.
Suspense presides with fluttering wings,
From which she shakes a thousand stings.

In this disastrous doubting case,
The Fox appears—with thinking face;
On him his royal master laid
His load of care, secure of aid;

Who paus'd a while with sober grace,
Then thus refin'd upon the case :—

Not things of moment most, I find,
Have broke the union of the mind ;
Ev'n mere mistakes, that pet or pride
Have made, the sacred band divide,
And deepest enmities arise.
From trifling things among the wise.
In friendship, slight's the deepest wound,
And that is fancy'd more than found.
These hints improv'd, our ends may gain,
The Bulls divided, count 'em slain ;
The Lion, pleas'd, reply'd, he knew
The Fox could forge a lie—or two ;
Which he opin'd, in points like this,
Would not be very much amiss.

Here wiser Reynard shook his head,
And this would never do, he said :
'Tis ours to make these foolish elves,
My lord, be liars to themselves :
Suspicion rais'd, the very eye
Will unsuspected gravely lie,
And, when a friend it shall survey,
Th' idea of a foe display,
As you shall see—— Away he flew,
And, to the friends as near he drew,
He smooth'd his brow, he coin'd a smile,
And put on all the masks of guile.
Then whispers one with friendly nod,
"Mark, is not yon behaviour odd ?
The Bull must surely mean affront,
His tail is next you—fie upon 't !

How slighting that! and there 's another
Can scarce some high resentment smother;
He snorts, he paws, and fain would shew
By vengeance whence his troubles flow.
The third, how dull! regardless still,
What fate you prove, or good or ill."
Appearance (treach'rous witness) here
Confirms the sounds that cheat his ear;
Suspicion soon alarm'd, and pride,
At once, to self the whole apply'd.
The Bull withdraws, resolv'd as due,
They first for his return should sue.

The Fox returns, and boasts his arts,
And to his liege the truth imparts:
"The Bull who turn'd his tail so rude,
Meant only not his ear t' intrude;
And he that spurn'd so fierce the ground
With anguish felt a hornet wound.
The third, the downy turf who prest,
Sought but the sweets of peaceful rest.
But come, to his remote retreat
I 'll guide my royal master's feet."
They go; the victim mourns too late
His absent friends and helpless state.
And slain, the Fox exulting cries,
"Not one but all shall be our prize."

Away he goes, and thus again
Infus'd soft flatt'ry, deadly bane!
"Great sir (says he to one), I swear
Your friends are rude, indeed they are;
Friendship a decent due respect
Should, rather than destroy, protect.

Superior far to these you rise,
The wise affirm: we trust the wise;
Your nobler port, your finer wit,
All with united voice admit;
And yet no just distinction's made
No deference shewn, no homage paid.
I wonder at your choice, but here
'Tis silence best becomes my sphere,
Tho' might your slave presume to tell
What all the forest thinks as well,
These are perhaps the only Two
With whom your worth would lose its due."

The Bull (how easy praise deceives!)
With pleasure hears, with pride believes;
Puts on the lofty looks and airs
Which humble merit never wears.
To treat him as an equal now
Inflames his heart, contracts his brow;
'Tis envy, or, 'tis worse, 'tis hate,
Denies due honour to his state;
He could not bear th' affronts they gave,
They break his peace, they make him rave;
They lov'd and they rever'd, he thought,
Less than the wretches knew they ought;
And (as is usual) storm'd and swore
That they might love and rev'rence more.
His friends, alarm'd, in deep amaze
On him, and on each other, gaze,
Disgust, in either's bosom bred,
Was shewn as diff'ring tempers led,
One bold and warm the taunts returns,
And with contagious anger burns,

Than this, not plagues are sooner caught,
Nor with more dreadful evils fraught,
The other, meek, in secret pines,
And friends he could not keep resigns;
Resigns, tho' late, with yearning heart,
And mourns persuasion's useless art.
Retiring now he leaves the fray,
The Fox still mark'd his pensive way,
The Lion found and seiz'd his prize,
And, like the first, the second dies.

The two who yet alive remain,
In dreadful conflict shake the plain;
The Fox observes the doubtful fight,
One drops—he smiles with fell delight;
Flies with the joyful news, and brings
The King to take what 's now the King's.
Faint, breathless, bleeding on the ground,
The hapless victor soon they found;
He falls an unresisting prey,
And crowns the triumphs of the day.

This tale a sage once told his son,
And thus apply'd it when he 'd done :—

"Do you, my child, with unsuspecting eye,
O'erlook what others labour to descry;
Kind to all faults, and to all failings blind,
Be you the last to think affronts design'd.
Cold seems thy friend?—by the severest laws
Thy conduct try, to find the latent cause.
Let thy heart pant for universal praise,
Such as, unbrib'd, to virtue, virtue pays.
Is this withheld? try ev'ry winning art
To melt the hard, to soothe the froward heart.

Sue for esteem—to all but fawning bend,
Whom this will purchase is a worthless friend;
But scorn the thought as vainest of the vain,
That what good-nature loses, pride will gain.
Less than your merit does your friend approve?
Still merit more—his love constrain with love.
This conduct try'd remains he still the same?
Learn you to pity what the world will blame.
The gen'ral censure, his neglect ensures,
Thy honour brightens and thy praise secures."

FABLE XXIII.

The Pepper-Box and Salt-Cellar.

THE 'squire had din'd alone one day,
And *Tom* was call'd to *take away*:
Tom clear'd the board with dextrous art:
But, willing to secure a tart,

The liquorish youth had made an halt,
And left the pepper-box and salt
Alone upon the marble table:
Who thus, like men, were heard to squabble.

Pepper began, "Pray, sir," says he,
"What business have you here with me?
Is 't fit that spices of my birth
Should rank with thee, thou scum of earth?
I 'd have you know, sir, I 've a spirit
Suited to my superior merit—
Tho' now, confin'd within this caster,
I serve a Northern Gothic master;
Yet born in *Java's* fragrant wood,
To warm an Eastern monarch's blood,
The sun those rich perfections gave me,
Which tempted *Dutchmen* to enslave me.

"Nor are my virtues here unknown,
Tho' old and wrinkled now I 'm grown.
Black as I am, the fairest maid
Invokes my stimulating aid,
To give her food the poignant flavour,
And, to each sauce, its proper savour.
Pasties, ragouts, and fricassees,
Without my seasoning, fail to please:
'Tis I, like wit, must give a zest,
And sprightliness to ev'ry feast.

"Physicians too my use confess;
My influence sagest matrons bless;
When drams prove vain, and cholics teaze,
To me they fly for certain ease.
Nay, I fresh vigour can dispense,
And cure ev'n age and impotence:

And when of dulness wits complain,
I brace the nerves, and clear the brain.

"But to the 'squire here, I appeal—
He knows my real value well:
Who, with one pepper-corn content,
Remits the vassal's annual rent—
Hence then, Sir Brine, and keep your distance,
Go lend the scullion your assistance;
For culinary uses fit,
To salt the meat upon the spit;
Or just to keep our meat from stinking—
And then—a special friend to drinking!"

"Your folly moves me with surprise,"
The silver tripod thus replies,
"Pray, Master Pepper, why so hot?
First cousin to the mustard-pot!
What boots it how our life began?
'Tis breeding makes the Gentleman;
Yet would you search my pedigree,
I rose like Venus from the sea:
The sun, whose influence you boast,
Nurs'd me upon the British coast.

"The chymists know my rank and place,
When nature's principles they trace:
And wisest moderns yield to me
The elemental monarchy.
By me all nature is supply'd
With all her beauty, all her pride!
In vegetation I ascend;
To animals their vigour lend;
Corruption's foe, I life preserve,
And stimulate each slacken'd nerve.

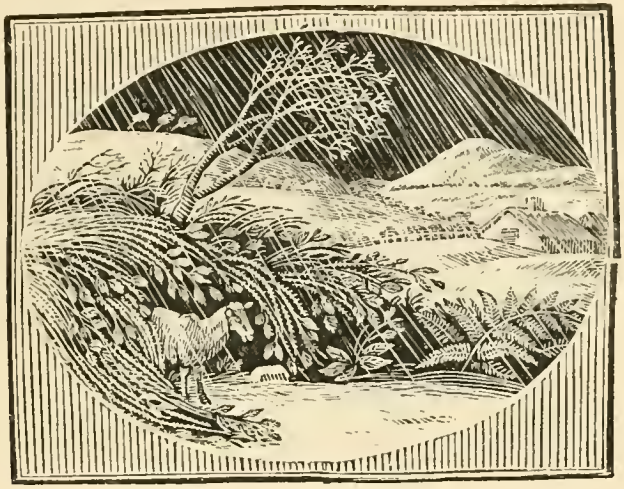
I give jonquils their high perfume ;
The peach its flavour, rose its bloom :
Nay, I 'm the cause, when rightly trac'd,
Of Pepper's aromatic taste.

"Such claims you teach me to produce ;
But need I plead my obvious use,
In seasoning all terrestrial food ;
When heaven declares, that Salt is good.

"Grant then, some few thy virtues find ;
Yet Salt gives health to all mankind :
Physicians sure will side with me,
While cooks alone shall plead for thee :
In short, with all thine airs about thee,
The world were happier far without thee."

The 'squire, who all this time sat mute,
Now put an end to their dispute :
He rung the bell—bade Tom convey
The doughty disputants away—

The Salt, refresh'd by shaking up,
At night did with his master sup :
The Pepper, Tom assign'd his lot
With vinegar, and mustard pot :
A fop with bites and sharpers join'd,
And, to the side-board, well confin'd.



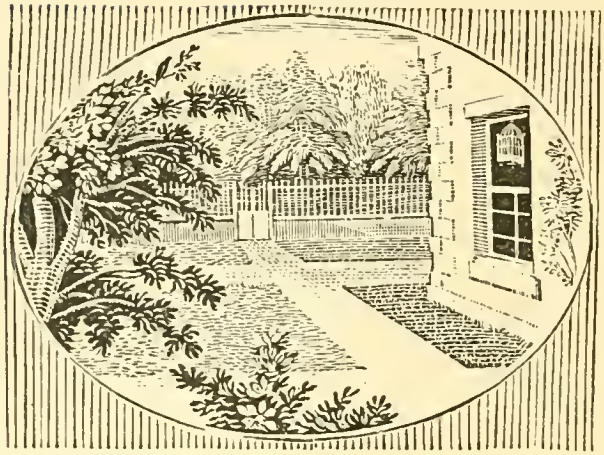
Fable XXIV.

The Sheep and the Bramble-Bush.

A THICK-TWISTED brake in the time of a storm,
Seem'd kindly to cover a sheep:
So snug, for a while, he lay shelter'd and warm,
It quietly sooth'd him asleep.

The clouds are now scatter'd—the winds are at peace,
The sheep 's to his pasture inclin'd;
But ah! the fell thicket lays hold of his fleece,
His coat is left forfeit behind.

My friend, who the thicket of law never tried,
Consider before you get in;
Tho' judgment and sentence are pass'd on your side,
By Jove, you 'll be fleec'd to your skin.



FABLE XXV.

The Blackbird and Bullfinch.

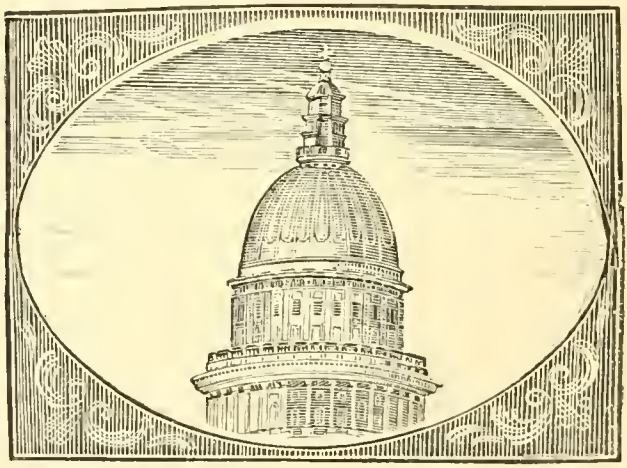
PERCH'D on a poplar's verdant spray,
A Blackbird sung the hours away;
Charm'd all around, and seem'd to call
On echo from his Lordship's hall.
Confin'd in state a Bullfinch there,
The melting music chanc'd to hear—
Bursting with envy, silence broke,
And thus from gilded cage he spoke:—

"Cease, bungler, thy discordant noise,
Untun'd thy throat, and harsh thy voice;
How dar'st thou, vagrant, as thou art,
To me thy dissonance impart?
Know'st thou I sing by studied rules,
And brag the learning of the schools?
Soft rapture to the heart convey,
And charm the list'ning soul away?

To please my Lord, and soothe his cares,
I warble soft Italian airs;
Which he in gratitude repays
With costly food, and gen'rous praise:
Whilst thou, condemn'd through air to rove,
Or hide thee in the gloomy grove,
To feebly suck thy beverage scant,
And pine in endless care and want;
To rocks and woods thy tale belongs,
Fit audience for thy stupid songs!
Away! no more my palace dun,
Or Dick, or Tom, shall fetch the gun."

He ceas'd—The fable bird returns
(With rising scorn his bosom burns),
"Thou little lordling, void of sense,
Dar'st thou, imperious, warn me hence?
Know, parasite, thy threats are nought,
Nor boast thy cage too dearly bought:
Above the frigid rules of art,
'Tis nature's dictates I impart;
Nor ever prostitute my lays,
But grateful sing my Maker's praise;
Whilst echoing o'er the hills and plains,
I cheer the nymphs and lab'ring swains;
Whether the rising notes I swell,
Or lightly load the passing gale;
With bolder music fill the grove,
Or gently call my mate to love:
Whether the joys of summer sing,
Or chant the beauties of the spring;
The varied notes still new appear,
And sweet transition charms the ear:

Whilst thou, puff'd up with self-conceit,
And idle thoughts of being great,
Nor freedom canst thyself allow,
Nor give to others what is due;
But pedant-like, in pride, elate
(With notions, as thy prison, strait),
Think'st thou alone can urge the strain,
Thy boasted learning then, how vain!
Attend this truth, and know for once,
That *learning ne'er unmade the dunce.*"



FABLE XXVI.

The Conceited Fly.

'TWAS in the charming month of May
(No matter, critics, for the day),
When PHOEBUS had his noon attain'd,
And in his blaze of glory reign'd;
A FLY as gay as e'er was seen,
Clad o'er in azure, jet, and green;

Gay, for his part, as birthday beau,
Whose soul is vanish'd into show;
On PAUL'S famed temple chanc'd to light,
To ease his long laborious flight:
There, as his optics gaz'd around
(An inch or two their utmost bound),
He thus began:—"Men vainly tell
How they in works of skill excel:
This edifice they proudly show
To prove what human art can do;
'Tis all a cheat—before my eyes
What infinite disorders rise!
HERE hideous cavities appear,
And broken precipices THERE:
They never us'd the plane or line,
But jumbled heaps without design."

He ceas'd contemptuous;—and as FLIES
Discern with microscopic eyes,
From what he saw he reason'd right,
But how inadequate the sight!
To mark the building from its base,
The pillar'd pomp, the sculptur'd grace,
The dome, the cross, the golden ball,
Much less the grand result of all!

So impious WITS, with proud disdain,
REDEMPTION'S hidden ways arraign,
Deem it beneath a BEING wise,
And, judging with their insect eyes,
View but a part, and then deny
Th' ETERNAL WISDOM of the sky.
But can thy ken, presumptuous man,
Unfold this deep and wondrous plan?

As well might insect organs see
Th' harmonious structure rais'd by thee,
As thine imperfect tube explore
This wise and gracious system o'er.

FINIS.

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